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THE

POPULAR ANTIQUITIES

OF

WALES.

WIRT SIKES,
UNITED STATES CONSUL.
CARDIFF. WALES.

THE CAMBRIAN

POPULAR ANTIQUITIES;

OR,

AN ACCOUNT

OF SOME

TRADITIONS, CUSTOMS, AND SUPERSTITIONS,

OF

WALES

WITH

OBSERVATIONS AS TO THEIR ORIGIN,

&c. &c.

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BY PETER ROBERTS, A. M.

RECTOR OF LLANARMON, VICAR OF MADELEY, AND AUTHOR OF COLLECTANEA CAMBRICA, ETC.

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TO

THE REV. DAVID HUGHES, D. D.

PRINCIPAL OF JESUS COLLEGE,

OXFORD,

These Remains of

CAMBRIAN ANTIQUITIES,

ARE INSCRIBED,

VERY RESPECTFULLY,

BY THE EDITOR.

Antiquities 192

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PREFACE.

The following tract on Popular Customs and Superstitions of Wales, was drawn up at the request of Mr. Williams, the Bookseller, who has published my former works relative to Wales, whose obliging attentions had a claim on my endeavours to gratify his wish.

In undertaking the work I soon perceived, that after what Brand, and others, have published on the Popular Antiquities of Britain, many of them were common to Wales and England, and on these it did not seem necessary to dwell. Many others which, a century ago, were known, have now grown nearly obsolete; and a neglect of them, now prevalent in England, is no less so in Wales. As to such as I have been able to collect, it has been my object to investigate their origin; and, I hope, the observations on them will not be found unsatisfactory, or destitute of information.

I here beg leave to return my respectful thanks, for the advantages I have had in the use of books from the valuable library of Miss Ormsby, of Parkington. I have the pleasure of gratefully acknowledging, that, wherever I have applied for information, what could

be given, has been liberally granted. I have only to add, that it is now my intention to proceed with the Collectanea Cambrica, and to repeat my acknowledgments for the favour with which what I have already published has been received.

P. ROBERTS.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN, from political or other causes, the manners and customs of a nation have, in general, undergone a great change, an inquiry into what they have been in former ages becomes interesting, not only as gratifying curiosity, but frequently as the means of dispelling doubts, and confirming ingenious conjectures, or probable assumptions of the regular historian. In that part of history more especially which regards the origin of nations, the inquiry, when applied to popular customs and traditions, is perhaps of more importance than it seems to have been esteemed; for it is very observable that whatever be the variations of modes and customs in the higher and middle orders of any nation which preserves a tolerably distinct existence as such, certain traditions, superstitions, amusements, and forms, will be maintained hereditarily, without even a knowledge of, or respect to, their origin, but merely as customary by the lower order. For such a pertinacious and general adherence to many of these, it will not be easy to account on any other principle than that they were first impressed on the minds of such nations respectively, when they originally became a regular society, with an established form of religion and government. Others must be referred to later cir-

cumstances readily discerned; but in those which are of the greatest antiquity there is much, that, when developed, may help to ascertain what were those principles of religion and policy which formed the character of the nation, and what was the state of the nation itself at different periods, though, at the first view, apparently trivial, and as such passed over unnoticed, or only incidentally alluded to, by the writer of history. Such are the ceremonies of April and May Days, St. John's and All Saints' Eves, the rude circles of large stones, the total absence of all imagery, the vestiges of seats of justice, and places of worship on high places. These are circumstances, which, being of the highest antiquity, may properly be referred to that state of society in which it existed when the Britons separated from the general mass of mankind, and took a western route as a distinct colony, carrying with it a certain, though not an accurate, tradition of the deluge, a memorial of ceremonies indicative of the chronological epochs of the most important primæval events, and a religion, which, though not purely Noachic, was not yet contaminated by idolatry. The sanctity of high places seems to have had its origin in the necessity of choosing such for large assemblies when the low lands were covered with wood, which, without the use of iron, could not be cleared; and consequently the antiquity of the performance of religious rites in such places would, in those of later times, when the assemblies could take place in other situations, inspire that religious reverence

for them which could not with facility yield to new institutions. To a kind of necessity originally may also be attributed the practice of putting captives to death; and I think more justly than to a ferocious principle, though undoubtedly the practice became such. When, after a victory, either the victors or the vanquished must have been famished, the alternative of the destruction of the enemy would no doubt be adopted by the people of a country, which, producing a scanty supply, exposed them to it. Its becoming a religious ceremony was the usual course of ancient customs of a public nature, of which this is one of the most horrid instances.

Of the persons, temper, dispositions, and manners of the Welsh, the description given by Giraldus Cambrensis is equally applicable at the present day. In their dress there does not appear to have been any thing in his time which particularly distinguished them from their English neighbours in similar ranks of society. Their dress and manners, when known to the Romans, have been so often detailed as not to need any repetition of them in a work, the object of which has been chiefly to notice and illustrate particulars, which, though in some degree known as traditional, have not already been so treated of as not to admit of farther explanation.

POPULAR ANTIQUITIES,

&c.

OF WALES;

Translated, from the doggrel Latin Verse of RALPH HIGDEN, into doggrel English.

OF THE NAME OF WALES.

THAT which now is Wales by name
Was erst called Cambria; and Fame
Says 'twas from Camber, Brutus' son,
A king who reigned here long agone;
And Wales from Gwala, Ebroc's daughter,
Who, quitting York, a dowry sought here.
Though others state, as their opinion,
Since Gwala here once had dominion,
'Twas from his name. It matters little
Which, when neither name will fit ill.
Though less than England, 'tis as good
In flesh and fish, in soil and wood.
The beef is good, the mutton better;
If England can produce such, let her.
The fertile valleys rich with corn
Woods defend, and flowers adorn,
And streams enrich, which, from their fountains,
Roll down between the lofty mountains:

Beneath their covering of green,
Of coal, or ores, spreads wide the vein,
And lime, now used by artists well in
That precious article, a * dwelling.
At feasts they've honey, milk, and cheese,
Bread and stout ale, and more to these,
Which here abound, the land produces
All for life's pleasures, or its uses.
But, as so much exceeds my plan,
I'll say as little as I can.
This nook o' the world seems to my mind
As if by Providence design'd
To keep its last best stores in savour,
And be its wallet-end of favour.
Where Tivy flows its winding tides
North Wales from the South divides;
Or, in the Latin tongue, so please ye,
Venedotia from Demetia.
South-Wallians glory in the bow,
Northerns with spear assail the foe.
Three courts had Wales (though 't not so now is)
Caermarthen, Anglesey, and Powis.
Its bishops too are now but four;
In better times it had three more,
And princes of its own could boast;
But now the Saxons rule the roast.

---

* Literally *in the joining of tiles for the roof.* When the original was written, such roofs were but lately come into use.

OF WELSH CUSTOMS.

In dress, and other things beside,
The Welsh and English differ wide:—
A cloak and vest, and trowsers trim,
The Welshman deems enough for him.
Thus clad, he braves the wind and rain,
Thinks more superfluous and vain,
At home, abroad, for rest or labour,
And scorns the foppery of his neighbour.
His legs should wear no covering
Even in the presence of a king.
Whene'er the Welsh attack the foe,
Their weapons are the spear and bow;
And better far they fight afoot
Than sallying forth as horsemen to't.
Woods are their castles, bogs their walls:
For whichsoever th' occasion calls,
To fight, or fly beyond a morass,
Each way alike the foe they harass.
A wight, who * bore the name of Gildas,
Says, "On their faith we cannot build;" as
Well it may be, we might have wondered,
When they've so oft been robbed and plundered,
Did they not every means essay
To drive th' invaders far away.

* This should be STOLE *the name of Gildas;* for this was the fact. The writer was not a Welshman.—See *Collectanea Camb.* Vol. I.

But now the woods are all cut down,
And forts at many a sea-coast town.
This nation, never left in quiet,
Could not be very nice in diet:
Round flat oat-cakes, or cakes of rye,
(Seldom of wheat,) their need supply;
With milk and butter, and square cheese;
Their vegetables beans and pease.
Their drink is mostly ale or mead:
Of wine they rather choose the red:
And oft is heard a merry tale
Inspired by mead, or wine, or ale.
Their meals the better to embellish,
Salt and a leek afford a relish:
And he, good man, the lord o' th' house,
Thinks it his pride to dole lobscouse
Till each one else forgets to fast,
Then kindly serves himself the last.
Their wicker dwellings stand full free,
Nor press their neighbour's liberty,
Like those in town, where every wall
Jostles its neighbour till its fall.
He, who has nought at home to eat,
At his next neighbour's finds a treat:
Then home returns, and, in requital,
Will, when he can, his friends invite all.
So wags their time, nor pines desire
For ease, or sleep, or cheerful fire.
When guests arrive, an offer meet
Is made of water for their feet;
And, if they wash them, then they're right
Welcome within to pass the night.
So easy is it food to find,
The purse is mostly left behind:

Yet do they comb and money hurdle,
If they have money, in their girdle.

* * * * * * * * * *

At feasts full merry is the throng,
With harp and pipe, and dance and song:
But at their funerals they sound
Goats' horns, to warn the country round.
Their origin from Trojan blood
They boast, and think none else so good.
Of pedigree so fond they've been,
A hundredth cousin's near of kin.
But, though their patriotic pride
Looks down on all the world beside,
Yet to the clergy of their nation
They pay respect and veneration;
And such obedient reverence shew,
As they were angels here below.
By Merlin's prophecies misled,
To war alone they've long been bred;
But, since the Saxon quarrels cease,
They learn the better arts of peace:
Their fields are ploughed, fair gardens made;
They seek the towns, and gain by trade:
They ride in arms, or walk in shoes,
And polished arts and manners use.
So like the English are they grown,
Scarce is the difference to be known;
And hence we learn the reason why
They've lived of late so quietly.
They are grown rich, and fear their toils
Would all be lost in warlike broils.
The poet of satiric Muse
Says, "He who nothing has to lose
May journey on with merrier mind
Than an armed knight with purse well lined."

OF THE WONDERS OF WALES.

Near Brecknock is a noted lake
Where plenty of good fish they take.
At different times its colour varies;
And they who view the lake's vagaries
See in it now a garden green,
And now a town adorns the scene;
But, when the frost has overcome it,
Strange sounds are heard to issue from it.
If the true Prince of Wales come there,
And bid the birds his right declare,
At his command they blithely sing,
But heed no other prince or king.

There is a hill near famed Carleon,
Which if the sun but dart a ray on,
It shines like gold: hence Goldcliffe hight:
But, if there's gold, 'tis not in sight.

Off Cardiff is an isle of yore,
Called Barri; on its northern shore
A cleft, to which apply the ear,
And wondrous sounds you'll straightway hear;
Now like the blasts of mighty bellows,
Now like the strokes of Vulcan's fellows;
Now like his grindstone, now his furnace,
When making, for Achilles, harness:
Yet, after all, 'tis but sea-water,
Perhaps, that makes this hideous clatter.

Much worse, alas! near Pembroke is it,
Where dæmons pay them many a visit,
Hack and befoul their Sunday clothes,
And all the secret ills expose.
Dæmons no monk can exorcise,
Nor saint's great toe kick outwardise;
When all the mischiefs they are brewing
Are presages of war and ruin.

On Craigmawr-hill there's a sepulchre,
And whosoever lays his hulk there
Finds it exactly fits his length,
And, if he's tired, recruits his strength.
But armour laid on't over night
Is found next morn in shattered plight.
In North Wales, and not far from Nevin,
Is Bardsey Isle, which monks do live in;
And live and die with such decorum,
All see their elders go before 'em:
And here likewise, as 'tis averred
Was Caledonian Merlin buried;
For 'tis believed that Merlins two
Have had with prophecy to do.
Th' one, imp-begotten, near Carmarthen,
Ambrosius called, like evil star, then
Foretold to Vortigern his fate,
His subjects' and his children's hate,
And his dire end: and, having so done,
Lived snug amidst the rocks of Snowdon,
Near Dinas Emrys, where the king
So anxious heard him say or sing.
The other Merlin Scotia claims,
Conspicuous in a brace of names,
Sylvestris called, or Caledonius,
The first, because like one felonious,

He shunned mankind, and roved about
In woods and forests, wit-without.
For once in battle, as 'tis said,
An airy spectre turned his head,
And he grew wild; yet his prediction
In Arthur's days, sans contradiction,
Is much more plain and much more clear
Than those of t'other Merlin are.
In Snowdon there are hills so high,
They seem like step-stones to the sky,
And, tho' you toil without much stop,
Scarce in a day you'll reach the top.
These are the pastures; here the fountains
Have formed two lakes between the mountains,
In one of which an island floats,
And bears about the sheep or goats,
Which, while it rested near the side,
Fearless the seeming main-land tried,
And, when the wind had proved it free,
Wondered to find themselves at sea.
The other lake yields many a dish,
Like * Mulwell Lake, of one-eyed fish.
Near Rhuddlan ebbs and flows a well
Twice every day. Why? None can tell.
In Anglesey † a curious stone,
Like to the human thigh, is shown,
Which, though it carried be, by day,
From its own station far away,
Has of itself such skill and might,
It comes back safe again at night.
Hugh, Count of Salop, as I've read,
Once took it gravely in his head

* In Scotland.

† Maen Morddwyd.

('Twas when first Henry sat on throne)
To try the powers of this stone:
So with another like it matched,
And to it by strong chain attached,
Tho' both into the sea were thrown,
This the next night returned alone.
A clown, who had the wish to try it,
Thought proper to his leg to tie it:
Ere morn the stone had homeward hied
And the clown's leg was mortified.
There is in Wales a rock far famed;
The Rock of Listeners 'tis named:
'Tis such, that if, upon one side,
The trumpet's loudest blast rings wide;
Yet on the other side, tho' near,
This sound will not affect the ear.
Not far from hence * an isle juts out
O' th' sea, where dwell men called devout;
Hermits, who, though they should be brothers,
Can sometimes quarrel too, like others:
But, when they do, woe worth the while!
The congregated mice o' th' isle
Rifle their hoards of beans and pease,
Make bandboxes of every chesse,
Forth through each hole their legions pour,
And every eatable devour;
Till by incessant depredation
They *conquer peace*, or make starvation.
Here also, as on Irish ground,
The † gloomy wanderer is found;
And th' holy men of either nation
Are vengeful when they're in a passion.

* Probably Priestholme.

† Such as the Brownie of Scotland.

In Scotland, Ireland, and in Wales,
Rev'rence for bells and crooks prevails:
And the oath ta'en on bell or crook,
Is sure as that on holy book.
At Basingwerk there is a spring
Well known, whose stream astonishing,
Soon as it rises, rolls along
A river copious, clear, and strong;
So large, if other water fails,
It may supply the whole of Wales.
Sick folk, who hither bring oblations,
Return with happy emendations.
Within the fount, stones spotted red
Mark where her holy blood was shed,
When Winifreda lost her head.
He who cut off her head, however,
And dared it from her trunk to sever,
To yell like curs condemned his race,
Till they seek pardon at this place;
Or at the town of Shrewsbury,
Where now in peace her relics lie.

OF DRUIDISM.

In a popular work of this nature it is not to be expected that a subject so extensive should be treated of copiously, or that difficulties respecting it should be discussed. The most simple, and perhaps, after all, the most satisfactory method that can be pursued here, will be to state consisely what has been related of them by ancient writers, and to add to this the substance of such farther information as may be derived from later researches, and appear necessary to the present purpose.

The length of time that Julius Cæsar had been in Gaul enabled him to acquire an extensive knowledge of the manners and customs of that country. In his description of these * the following account of the Druids is given :—

" They are the ministers and teachers " of religion; superintend public and pri-

* Commentaries, Book vi., of the War in Gaul.

" vate sacrifices. To them the youth in " great numbers apply for instruction, " and shew them great respect; for, in " general, they decide in all controver- " sies, public and private: if a crime be " committed, if a person be slain; if suc- " cession to property or the boundaries of " land be in question; they determine the " case, and adjudge the rewards and " punishments. If any one, whether in a " private or public station, refuses to abide " by their award, they interdict him " from the sacrifices, which is their greatest " punishment; for the interdicted are " looked upon as impious wretches, and " avoided by all. No one will admit them " into society, or speak to them, for fear " of contamination, and are neither allowed " legal redress nor mark of respect.

" One Druid, who has supreme authority, " presides over all the rest; and on his " death, if there be one of pre-eminent " estimation, he succeeds. If several of " equal pretensions, the successor is elected " by the votes of the Druids. Sometimes " this supreme dignity is contended for " even by force.

" At a certain season of the year they " hold an assembly in a consecrated place, " esteemed the central place of Gaul, and " in the district of the Carnutes" *(nearly that of Orleans.)* " Hither all who have " any controversies repair from every " other part, and submit to their judg- " ments and decrees. The institution is " thought to have originated in Britain, " and to have been brought over into " Gaul from thence, and, at this time, " they who wish to perfect their knowledge " of it, generally go to study it there.

" The Druids are not accustomed to " engage in warfare, nor do they, together " with others, pay tribute, but are ex- " cused from military service, and, in " every respect, are privileged.

" Such being their advantages, many " become voluntarily attached to them, " and are sent by their parents and rela- " tions to them. The students there are " said to commit to memory a great " number of verses; and some of them, " therefore, continue their studies for

" twenty years, for they do not think it " allowable to commit their institutes to " writing, though in all other affairs, whe- " ther public or private, they make use of " Greek characters. This rule, I presume, " they have laid down for two reasons, " viz., because they wish to prevent a dis- " closure of their instructions to the public, " and because that they who learn, when " they can have recourse to writings, neg- " lect the exercise of the memory.

" Their leading principle is, that souls " do not perish, but pass after death into " other bodies: a principle which, in their " opinion, is the greatest incentive to " virtue, and contempt of death. They " also lecture on the stars, and their mo- " tion; the magnitude of the earth, and " its divisions; on natural history; and on " the power and government of the im- " mortal gods: and instruct the youth in " these subjects."

" The whole nation of the Gauls is ex- " tremely devoted to superstition, and " hence they who labour under severe in-

" firmities, or are engaged either in war,
" or other hazardous situations, offer * hu-
" man victims, or devote themselves to be
" sacrificed, and of these sacrifices the
" Druids are the officiating priests. They
" hold that the immortal gods are not to
" be appeased for the death of a man but
" by the death of another, and have re-
" gular public sacrifices of this sort. Some
" of them have immensely large images,
" the limbs of which are formed of osier-
" twigs. These they fill with men, and,
" setting them on fire, burn their victims
" to death. In these cases they consider
" criminals, &c., as the victims most pleas-
" ing to the gods, but if there be not a

* These sacrifices seem to have been so terrible to the Romans, that one of the first consequences of their victories, was the endeavour to suppress the whole order of the Druids, which, Pliny says, was effected throughout Gaul by Tiberius. What makes this the more singular is, that the Romans themselves did, at this very time, regularly offer up human sacrifices to Jupiter Latiaris. Even Cæsar himself offered up such a sacrifice on the day of his triumph. These horrid sacrifices were not, however, wholly suppressed at that time, though mostly so, and in later times, the absolute sacrifice being dispensed with, the devoted, as victims, were brought to the altar, and a small libation of their blood shed there.

" sufficient number of them, they supply " it with innocent persons.

" Mercury * is the god whom they re- " spect the most, and of him they have " many images. They esteem him to have " been the inventor of all arts, the pro- " tector of ways and roads, and most " powerful to increase wealth and mer- " chandise. The next in estimation are, " Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva; of " whom they have nearly the same ideas

* It is a most prejudicial and unpardonable affectation or indolence in the Greek and Roman writers, that they scarcely ever give the names of deities but in their own language, and hence we know not, with any certainty, what was the Gaelic, or the Welsh name, of any of these gods, neither are we told what was the form of these images. An old commentator on Persius says, that Mercury was worshipped under the form of a cube, yet no such stones, nor any other than unhewn stones, are found in the remains of Druid temples. Much has been written on the etymology of the Roman names of the deities, but to very little purpose hitherto, since it requires something more than a similarity of sound to establish the real derivation of a word. Without entering, therefore, on so abstruse a subject, farther than to observe, that Beli, or Belinus, is said, by Ausonius, to be the same as Apollo, it shall suffice to notice, that the respect paid to Mercury intimates that the Gauls were a mercantile nation, careful of their public ways, and skilled in various arts.

" that other nations have, viz., that Apollo
" averts diseases; that Minerva first taught
" the working of wool and embroidery;
" that Jupiter rules supreme in heaven;
" and Mars protects in war. To Mars they,
" previous to battle, generally devote the
" spoils. The animals are sacrificed; the
" rest is brought together to one place, and
" many of such spoils may be seen, piled
" up in the consecrated places of many
" cities. It is very seldom that any part
" of the spoils are concealed, or taken
" away from the place where they are de-
" posited, through inattention to their re-
" ligion, and if it were, the heaviest pun-
" ishment and torture would be inflicted
" on the perpetrator of the deed."

" All the Gauls say that they are de-
" scended from Dis *, and that this is the
" tradition of the Druids. For this reason

* Dis, or Pluto, is said to have reigned over the infernal regions, which Homer places in the country of the Cimmerians. The meaning of the tradition then is, that the Gauls, according to the Druidical tradition, came from the country to the north of the Black sea, and were descendants of the ancient Cimmerians.

" they reckon time by * nights, and not " by days, and observe the times of their " birth, and the beginnings of years so, as " that the day is reckoned from the eve." †

" Their power was," says ‡ Dio Chrysostom, " superior to that of the kings, " for the kings could not act without their " advice and approbation." But this is no more than the power of the priests in every other heathen state which looked to omens or oracles for the signification of the Divine will as to its undertakings, of which signification the priests were the interpreters.

To the account of the Druids given by Cæsar, the later Greek and Roman writers have added little. Strabo and Ammianus Marcellinus observe, merely, that there

* This is done both in Welsh and English at this day. We say Wythnos, Pythefnos, that is *eight nights*, and *fifteen nights* in Welsh, and in English sevenight, fortnight, and hence, probably, arose the custom of keeping the eves of festivals.

† Cæsar de Bello Gall., lib. 6.

‡ Orat. 49. . Quoted by Godwin.

were three orders of men in particularly high estimation amongst all the Celtic nations, viz., the Druids, of whom they mention nothing that improves upon Cæsar's description; the Bards, who were poets, and composed and sang their devotional poetry; and the Vates, or Eubates, in Welsh Ofyddion, who offered the sacrifices, and made natural history their study. Lucan says, that the Druids resided in the recesses of thick groves, and Pliny, that the oak and missletoe were esteemed as most sacred by them.

Scanty as these accounts are, it appears from them, that the Druids constituted a school of philosophy, and were the religious and moral instructors of the nation; that the Vates were the officiating priests, to whom a knowledge of natural history was so far requisite, as to be able to determine on the natural or unnatural appearances of the viscera of the victims, and, perhaps, other phœnomena which came under their observation. The Bards were sufficiently distinguished by their peculiar talents.

Of the religious rites, none of these authors have noticed any but two, as peculiar to them. The one, that sacrificing a man, they struck him on the back with a sword, and drew their omen from the convulsions of the victim: the other, that they formed a large image of wicker, and, filling it with human victims, burned them, which is also noticed as above by Cæsar, but, with the limitation, that the forming of such images was not a general custom, but confined to some parts of Gaul, though human sacrifices were general.

As Druidism was so soon repressed, though not for some ages wholly extirpated, in Gaul, and, no doubt, persecuted in like manner, as far as the Roman power extended in Britain, the classic writers could have little, if any thing more, to communicate. To their enemies, the Druids would not, under such circumstances, be forward to give information, and from others it could not be obtained. Their sacrifices were undoubtedly horrid in themselves, and to the Romans terrible, because they were by fire. Otherwise the Romans

had little reason to reproach them; for a more savage and unprincipled nation than that of the Romans, never polluted the earth. What refinement or science they had was borrowed from that truly refined and civilized nation the Greeks, and they used it, as savages almost always do, what they learn of a civilized nation, as means of gratifying vanity, and extending the mischievous effects of artifice and circumvention. The Druid sacrifice was, however, common to many nations of antiquity, to the Canaanites, Greeks, Scythians, &c.; and even at this day the burning of the widow of a Brahmin, in the East-Indies, is, in fact, a human sacrifice.

As the Druids of Gaul derived their institutes from Britain, that of sacrificing their enemies appears, even from this circumstance, to have prevailed here, and is, I think, alluded to in one of the songs of the Gododin, as a custom of the Saxons, and in another ancient Welsh poem, as that of the Britons :—

Gwelais y ddull o bentir Adoen
Aberth am goelcerth y disgynnin. *Gododin*, p. 12.

I beheld from the high land of the Done the spectacle of the sacrifice to be consumed by fire.

Mab coelcerth fy ngwerth a wnaethant
O aur pur a dur ac ariant. *Gorchan Cynfelin.*

When I was devoted to the (sacrificial) flames, they ransomed me with pure gold, silver, and steel.

The latter poem is attributed to Taliesin, but is probably of a much greater antiquity, though he may have been the recorder of this, and several other poems, certainly Druidical, which are attributed to him.

As Druidism was the religion of this island at so early a period, it might be expected that, in such a situation, and especially in the parts of the island most remote from the continent, the religion would be very nearly that of the first colonies of the dispersion of mankind; that it would, in its forms and ceremonies of worship, resemble those of the patriarchs, as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and retain some tradition of the deluge; and such is the fact. The oak was their sacred tree, and in the recesses of groves were their schools and temples. Their temples

appear to have been spaces exposed to the open air, marked out by unhewn stones arranged in a circular form, and their magnificence, designated by the size of the rude masses which marked their extent, and the space they limited, as at Stonehenge, Abury, and Rollright or Rolldritch. Near the middle of these temples a cromlech, or stone of immense size, is generally found, which has been considered as the altar, though its use is not ascertained. It is also observable, that at Stonehenge, the longest diameter of the temple lies so correctly north and south, as to manifest a very accurate degree of astronomical observation in the laying of the plan. That the cromlech had a reference to the Deity is the more probable, as the sacred stone in the temple of Mecca is, even in these days, an object of reverential respect. Apollonius Rhodius also says, " that *

* Εισω δε μεγας λιθος ηρεριστο
Ἱερος, ω ποτε πασας Αμαζονες ευχετοωντο

Martin, as quoted by Borlase, page 190, says, that the inhabitants of Classernisse had a tradition, that the chief Druid stood by the great stone in the temple there, to harangue the people. This is most probably the truth,

" there was a sacred black stone in a " temple of Mars, to which all the Ama- " zons, in times of old, had addressed " their prayers." This seems to have been of the same kind. Even at present the peasantry have an idea that the * rain-water, which lodges in the cavities on the surface of cromlechs, has a medicinal virtue, particularly for the relief of sore eyes, an idea which seems to be a vestige of an ancient superstition. Had not the persecution of Druidism by the Romans, and the propagation of Christianity subverted the Druidical power, possibly the temples of the Druids might have emulated those of Indostan in workmanship, as they do in magnitude, since both seem to have been structures intended for forms of worship not very dissimilar in their origin.

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and, from this circumstance, the name of *Llech-lafar*, or the *speaking stone*, at St. David's, most probably had its name.

* In an old Welsh calendar it is said, that on the eve of Trinity Sunday, it was the custom to wash or bathe to prevent the tertian-ague. As Trinity Sunday falls near the summer solstice, this may be looked upon as originally a Druidic superstition of that season.

The rites of the Druids appear, from Mr. Davies's late publication on the subject, to have been founded on a corrupted, or, more probably, an emblematical history of the deluge, as the early superstitions of most other nations were. As the original colonies dispersed, they carried the tradition with them, and, until the art of writing was known, probably recorded it by means of emblematical designs, which were to be interpreted by the learned. But as, after the confusion of languages, colonies of different languages intermixed, or the original interpretation was forgotten, or new ideas were engrafted on it, the history was supposed to be that of the then settlement of a colony, and some of the emblems were mistaken for representations of good or evil powers, a regular mythology was substituted for the real history. In this process, though the foundation was the same, the superstructure would, in some degree, necessarily be varied by local ideas, acquired habits of thinking, and the correct or incorrect state of the oral tradition as to various parts of it; and hence it has been, and may be, safely assumed, that

the religious rites of Paganism are derived from the same origin, and varied only by circumstances of the various colonies. Losing the knowledge of the true God, the highest object worthy of adoration to an ignorant mind would be the sun, considered either as the great origin of light, or his representative; with whom the moon and stars would be thought to co-operate in an inferior degree. Hence the chief personage in Druidical mythology is distinguished by the name Hu, which is the root of Huan, the name of the sun as dispenser of light, and, perhaps, may have been so worshipped. But his general character is more like that of the Hindu Vishnu; it is that of an incarnate deity. After a deluge, from which two persons only escaped, he, with his oxen, is said to have drawn a monster out of the lake, which burst and caused the deluge. Vishnou is also said to have destroyed the monster which troubled the ocean. Hu was the instructor of mankind in various useful arts: Vishnou also preserved the Vedas for the instruction of mankind. Hu conducted the Cymry to Britain from Thrace.

To this Vishnou affords no parallel, for the Hindus do not consider themselves as having emigrated. Hu was the conqueror of land and sea, and the life of all that are in the world ; and these are likewise attributes of Vishnou : and, finally, both are represented as clothed with a human form, and both of a beneficent disposition towards man. The oxen of Hu were twins from a sacred cow, and the history of this cow is so far the same as that of the sacred cow Camdoga of the Hindus, that she is said to have supplied the vicinage at one time with milk till all the vessels were filled. The traditional Welsh legend calls her *The brindled Cow*, and adds, that an old sorceress coming for milk after the vicinage had been supplied, could obtain none from the cow, and in revenge set her mad ; in consequence she ran wild over the mountains, and became a calamity to the country, but at last was slain by Hu, or, as the relater of this part of the story called him, Guy, Earl of Warwick, near Hiraethog, in Denbighshire. The scene of the transaction is laid in so many places in Wales, that it should seem there was a

sacred cow wherever there was a Druidical temple; and that the origin of the history of the Dun Cow was from the same tradition is evident. The epithet Dun, given to this cow, seems more properly to be referred to the place than to her colour, and to signify the same as it does in *Dun*stable, *Dun*church, &c., and that she was the Cow of *the Hill*, and worshipped as symbolical of the ark. In fact it appears from the above-mentioned laborious work, that a reference to the deluge was the principal feature of the ceremonies of Druidism. Hence in the poem of the Gododin, Noe and Eseye, or, as it should be written, Noe and Isha, that is *Noah and* * *the woman*,

* I must confess it appears very strange to me that so very little, if any, notice, has been taken of the wife of Noah, by the interpreters of ancient mythology, though surely, as second mother of the whole human race, she would not have been forgotten. Yet the opinion, that the ark was personified as a female deity, has been so general, that it may be thought presumptuous to differ from it. The above introduction of the names prove, however, that she was not neglected by the Welsh, and, I believe, that she was the real Isis, (as the name itself, by its approximation to *Isha*, intimates,) and the Cybele of the Greeks, and that, when the sun was made the representative of Noah,

viz., * *his wife* are noticed; and in another poem entitled, The Praise of Lludd the Great, the following lines are introduced as the chaunt, probably, in a procession; which appear to be in the Hebrew language:—

O Brithi Brith oi
Nu oes nu edi
Brithi brith anhai
Sych edi edi eu roi.

If these lines, with slight alterations, be read as follow, they will give a sense which, though not perhaps the correct one, may lead to a more happy conjecture:

Hoi Berithi Berith hai	הוי בריתי בריח חי
Nuach iesh Nuach edi	נח יש נח עדי
Berithi Berith ein hai	בריתי ברית עין חי
Such edi, edi ha roe.	סך עדי עדי הראה

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the moon was made so of his wife. This interpretation is so simple and obvious as not, I hope, to require farther apology.

* I beg leave here to observe that, in the mode adopted of reading without points, the authors of all grammars, I have seen, have fallen into a gross error in making vowels of the ה and ע, the former being a simple aspirate, and the latter that known by the name of the *Northumbrian burr*, as on a comparison with the Arabic alphabet will appear.

Ho! my covenant is the covenant of life,
Noah, Noah is my witness,
My covenant is the covenant of the fountain of life.
The shrine! is my witness; the prophet (viz., Noah) is my witness.

What is translated *shrine* properly signifies a *covered dwelling*, and may have been some kind of a representation of the ark carried in the procession, and which is the poem called Ked, *i. e.*, the ark or chest.

As Hu resembled, in character, the Vishnou, so did Ceridwen the Callee of India, as the Goddess of Death, and, upon the Druidical System of the Metempsychosis, as the goddess of the renovation of life. She was the goddess of the sacred mysteries, and, in this respect, the character attributed to her resembles that of the goddess Ceres of the Greeks. The caldron of Ceridwen is much celebrated

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These errors are the more injurious, as they make all the verbs, in which they occur, irregular with respect to them, which, if they were used as aspirates, would be regular. Thus if the verb פעל be read *pol*, it will be irregular; if *pagnal*, *paghal*, or *pahal*, it will be regular, and so of others.

by the Welsh poets, as containing the waters of science and inspiration. This water the goddess and nine assistant nymphs were supposed to have medicated by an infusion of sacred herbs; a few drops of it were separated, which conferred the benefit, and the remainder, after the separation, became poisonous. By the Christians, as the Druid rites would be deemed impious, Ceridwen seems to have been considered as a sorceress, whose caldron was filled with all that was loathsome, and teeming with spells of the most noxious influence, and hence the origin of the fabulous traditions of witches and their caldron, which has been so strongly impressed on the minds of the public by the representations of Middleton and Shakespeare.

These two, viz., Hu and Ceridwen, appear to have been the principal objects of veneration, and, as to the rest, of whom there were no small number, the reader is referred to the work above mentioned.

The Druids are said to have made use

of many herbs in their rites. Of these, the chief were the missletoe, the samolus, perhaps *symye*, or the cowslip, and vervain. On the uses of these I beg leave to offer some conjectures, which have not, to my knowledge, been anticipated. As the French, or rather Breton, name of the missletoe is *Gwi*, it seems to have been called *Gwydd*, i. e., *the Herb*, by pre-eminence, by the British Druids, though it is now known in Wales by the name of Uchel-wydd, (a compound of uchel, *high*, and gwydd.) The species which grows on the oak is much larger, and of a deeper green, than the common missletoe, as appears from a specimen in my possession: but, in general, the sprigs are so well adapted to the formation of the Bardic alphabet, first published by Mr. W. Owen, that this may have been one cause of the esteem in which it was held. There is, however, another and more important. The blossom falls off within a few days of the summer solstice, and the berry within a few days of the winter solstice, in the common plant; and, perhaps, those on the oak missletoe may do so, more near to

those times. This, then, rather than any medical virtues of the herb itself, which are at least dubious, was, probably, the true cause of its estimation. Rowland says, " that the chief Druid, clad in white, " ascended the oak, and, with a conse- " crated knife, gathered the missletoe on " the sixth of March," more properly, it was on the day of the vernal equinox; but whether at that time the missletoe presents any distinctive appearance, I know not; perhaps it then shed the old leaves, as evergreens generally do about that time.

The other herbs seem to have been of real medical use, in the gathering of which certain rites were to be attended to, as the precautions of our old herbalists and astrological quacks were, in order to give importance to their prescriptions. Of these, the symyl, or cowslip, if, as from the similarity of names is probable, it be the samolus, is a gentle opiate, and might be used as an anodyne. The vervain is a much more powerful medicine. It is well known, that worms produce sometimes

the greater part of the symptoms, which were formerly believed to be the effects or witchcraft, and vervain is a powerful vermifuge. Parkinson gives two remarkable cases, in which the tape-worm was expelled by the use of it; and, as the Druids, and other pagan priests in general, were well acquainted with medical botany, they might be no way disinclined to represent those herbs as sacred, which had powerful effects in medicine, and more especially one, which, by expelling worms, gave them the credit of a dominion over evil spirits.

The principal doctrines of the Druids, and their mode of instruction, have already been given from Cæsar; but, as he has not recorded any thing of the peculiar forms of the verses in which their doctrines were taught, a few examples of them may be acceptable. These verses were triplets in rhime or prose. The most ancient of the triplets in rhime, generally consist of three distinct parts. The first words are merely a kind of key to a certain number of triplets, probably, a series committed to me-

mory together, sometimes suggesting the sequel, sometimes not. The second part introduces some circumstance in natural history, or in common life; and the third is a moral sentence in the proverbial style, and deduced from the preceding circumstance. Thus natural history and morality were blended together, and the disciple taught to draw moral instruction from a contemplation of ever-familiar objects. As for instance,

Eiry mynydd, gwancus iâr
Gochwyban gwynt ar dalar
Yn yr ıng gorau yw'r câr.

Snow of the mountain.
The bird is ravenous for food.
The wind whistles on the headland.
In distress a relation (or friend is the most valuable.

Calangauaf garw hin
Anhebig i gyntefin
Namyn Duw nid oes Dewin.

The first day of winter.—Severe is the weather (which may be expected,)
Unlike the first of summer, (but)
None but God can foresee what is to come.

"Thus," says Mr. Davies, "whatever

" page of nature was presented to their " view, their teachers (the Druids) had " contrived to make it a page of wisdom."

The same form of triplet in verse and in prose was afterwards adopted by the Christians, and in moral precepts, and even in decisions of the laws, and records of history, the triplet is used to an extent that, to one not conversant in them, would almost exceed belief. The moral triplets have frequently an epigrammatic turn, which renders them at once amusing and instructive, and gives them a surer hold on the memory.

Of the three orders of Bardism, Druids, Bards, and Ovates, the following is the account given in the Welsh Triads, taken from Appendix 5, to the first volume of Collectanea Cambrica.

" There are three branches of the pro- " fession of Bardism. First, the chief " Bard; that is to say, a bard of full pri- " vilege, who has acquired his degree, and " privilege of a seat in the assembly of " bards, by regular instruction under an

" improved teacher. His office is to keep
" up a memory of arts and sciences; this
" being his duty as a bard regularly and
" fully instituted; and also to preserve
" the memory of that which relates to the
" country, family, marriages, pedigrees,
" arms, districts, and rights, of the Welsh
" territory or nation."

From hence it appears, that the Bards were not only poets, but historians, and genealogists: that they not only celebrated those who were distinguished by excellence in any respect, but formed, in their official station, a court of record, by which the rights of territory and family were preserved, and as long as a family bard was, by custom, attached to the suite of royalty or nobility in Wales, he appears to have retained the care of the family history. The true nature of the Bardic system appears hitherto, in one respect, to have been little understood. As the term Bard, taken literally, signifies POET, little more has been attributed to the title than the character of poet, and the title has been supposed to imply, regularly, a genius for poetic com-

position, by myself, no less than by others. The supposition is, indeed, true in part, but on a more particular consideration, I am induced to believe, that its signification in our old writers is more extensive. It is well known that the instructions of the Druids were given in verses, and, though the composers of their instructions in verse were properly Bards, or poets, it appears to me, that the name of Bard was also given to those who were able by means of such verses to give instruction, and then to such as were eminent for their learning, and were the chief instructors of the ages in which they lived. Such I apprehend was Taliesin, who, though eminent as a poet, does not assume his dignity so much as derivable from poetic talents, as from scientific knowledge, and it was probably to the latter he owed his pre-eminence. The notices of the systems of the Bards thus considered, at least, such as I have met with, do not enable me to give an accurate account of it; but they are such as to make it probable that they had an institution similar to our universities, and that the Bards formed a collegiate body.

" Secondly, the Ofydd, whose degree " is acquired as the privilege of natural " poetic genius or praise-worthy know- " ledge, which he shall prove to be well " founded, by being examined before a " lawful session of Bards, which is judged " expedient, lest the advantages arising " from the powers of natural poetic ima- " gination should be repressed."

This description of the Ofydd contains no intimation that the Ofydd was the officiating priest at sacrifices, and it should therefore seem that the sacrifices of the Druids were repressed, or at least not thought proper to be mentioned when the Triad was written. The two offices might certainly have existed together, and the support and instruction have been given in consideration of the natural endowments of the Ofydd.

" The third is the Druid-bard, who must " be a regularly instituted bard of session. " His duty is to give moral and religious " instruction in the session of bards, in " the palace, in the place of worship, and

" in the family, in which he has full pri-
" vilege."

From hence it appears there was in general a Druid attached to each family, a circumstance so exactly conformable to the system of the Brahmins of Hindostan, as to mark still more clearly the similarity between the religion of the Druids and theirs, and perhaps the trial by ordeal may afford another instance.

From the learned work already referred to, it appears that the ceremonies of initiation into the druidical mysteries, had a great resemblance to those of the initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries. The aspirant was to undergo a kind of imprisonment, and to pass through scenes contrived to impress terror and religious awe. The intent of these trials was, I suppose, to prove the fortitude of the man, and therefore the safety of intrusting him with their secret doctrines; or, if his courage failed, to create a horror and a dread of revealing more of what he had seen, than they should think proper to suffer to be

known. When he has passed these probationary trials successfully, the rites of purification were performed, and he was admitted to a participation of the mysteries. Mr. Davies thinks that the spaces under some of the large cromlechs were used as the places of imprisonment of the aspirants, and this opinion seems to be confirmed by the name of a cell near the Ridgeway, and the White Horse, in Uffington parish. It is called *Wayland-smith*, a corruption, I presume, of a Welsh name *Gwely*, or *Wely-anesmwyth*, that is, the *uneasy bed*. I know of no more probable origin of the name, and this explanation bears with it a signification of no small moment, as to the use to which it was probably applied. In Cardiganshire there is a kind of cist-vaen called *Gwely* Taliesin, which no doubt was intended for a similar purpose.

Among the remaining traces of the religious ceremonies of the Druids, one appears to exist in the dance which is so well known, as stated in the Vicar of Wakefield to be the limits of the accom-

plishments of the Misses Flamborough, viz., the *Roundabout*, or more precisely the Chesire-round. This is danced by two only, one of each sex; after leading off into the middle of an imaginary circle, and dancing a short time opposite to each other, the one strives by celerity of steps in the circumference of the circle to overtake and chase the other round it; the other in the mean time endeavouring to maintain an opposite situation by equal celerity in receding. This dance has so strong a reference to the motions of the sun and moon in their approaches and recessions, in their apparent courses, as leave no doubt on my mind that it was originally a sacred dance in honour of those luminaries. Borlase says, "In Cornwall "there is a great number of those (stone) "circles, and the name they go by most "commonly is that of Dawns-mên, that "is the *stone-dance*," (rather, I should think, the *dancing-stones*, or *stones where the dance was held.)* "*Dawnse*, in Cor-"nish, signifies *a dance*, and, in the cir-"cular figure, (of which we are now treat-"ing,) there is a very ancient dance, or

" play, still practised among the Cornish.' In the note he adds, " 'Tis called Trema- " theeves ;" but what this name signifies he has not explained. From his account of the dance it seems to be the same, or nearly so, as the Cheshire-round, and, perhaps, the *lesser* stone circles, were, in general, intended merely to inclose, or limit, the spaces for such dances, or other amusements.

OF THE GREAT DRUIDICAL TEMPLE IN BRITANY.

THERE appeared a short account of this temple some time ago in the Monthly Magazine, which induced me to make some inquiries relative to it; and by Monsieur de Cambon, a French gentleman, whose residence was not far from it, I have been favoured with the following particulars. This immense work is situated near * Carnac, and supposed by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who have no tradition, or idea of Druidism, to have been a Roman work, originally intended as a barrier against the influx of the sea. But, though this may have been suggested by a superficial notice of the most perfect part as it now stands, it must appear from the extensive remains, that this could

* Carnack is also the name of a village near the great Egyptian Temple of Lahor, and both temples seemed to have belonged to the same religious system.

never have been the purpose for which it was erected. The most perfect part consists of pillars about fifteen feet high, set in sixteen rows, so that the spaces between the rows form alleys, of which that in the middle is the broadest, being about forty paces wide. These pillars are, in form, somewhat like a ninepin, being larger in the middle than at either end. These rows of pillars appear tolerably perfect for nearly a mile from Carnac, and at about this distance from Carnac there is a flat altar. From the remains visible, the rows appear to have extended from sea to sea, across the tongue of land on which Quiberon stands, about four miles to the north of this town. Near the middle of this line some pairs of stones are standing, so placed as if intended to mark entrances or gateways; and near the east end of the line there is a large spheroid, once about forty feet long, but now lying in three pieces, and near it a flat stone, about thirty feet long, twenty-four broad, and two thick. I could not learn that there were any traces of stones in a circle.

In digging near Carnac, there were found twenty-four Celts, of highly polished jasper, arranged in a circle, in the centre of which circle was another Celt, of the same form and materials, but this was larger than the rest, and was, moreover, distinguished by being pierced through the middle. The hole was in diameter about half an inch.

Tumuli are frequent in Britany, and near Carnac there is a mound wholly artificial, and so high, that it is made a station to observe vessels at sea.

Whether the Celtic institution of France has paid any attention to Britany or not, I have not been able to discover; but these will suffice to shew, that it has a claim to the researches of the antiquary.

OF DRUIDIC CIRCLES.

THOUGH much has been written on this subject, it can by no means be said to be exhausted, as the uses for which they were constructed, have rather been guessed at than ascertained, though, as to some of them, the general opinion is so far determined, as that it is agreed, that these structures were intended as temples. But, if the usages of ancient nations be attended to, or even some of modern times, it will not be thought extravagant to assume that these circles were not merely temples, or places dedicated solely to the purposes of religious worship, as our churches are; but also made use of for other purposes, which, though not in themselves strictly religious, were to be sanctioned by religious rites.

As religion is that which alone can secure social compact and fidelity; and as, even in the forms of heathenism, it pre-

sented to the eyes rites indicative of the presence of a powerful, unseen being, witnessing all attestations, and ready to reward the observance, or punish any violation, of truth or justice; in every regular form of society, even the most simple has, of necessity, connected religious ceremonies with political obligation.

As among other nations, so also amongst the Britons, the great temples appear to have been the appointed places for the legislative assemblies; and, accordingly, one of the old Welsh poets, alluding to Stonehenge, calls it *Mawr cor Cyfoeth*, or, *The great sanctuary of the Dominion*, and the very first view of the very ingenious and elegant representation of Stonehenge, by Sir R. C. Hoare, in his Antiquities of Wiltshire, as he conjectures it originally appeared, I could not but be forcibly struck with the analogy which the disposition of the parts bears to that of the * sta-

* In Psalm lxviii., ver. 28, there is in the word רגמתם, *rigmatham*, translated *their counsel*, a reference to the custom of assembling *a council* (for so it should be translated) in

tions of the court of law in the time of Howel Dda, as represented in his code; and, from this analogy, I imagine that the order in the great national council bore a certain degree of resemblance to that of the law-court.

When such assemblies were convened, the first ceremony was that of sacrifice; in which the animals were not usually slain *in* the temple, but in the area before it; a portion of the blood was, in some cases, carried in and offered to the Deity, and

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a place marked, or laid out, with stones, as the word properly signifies *a collection*, or, *heap of stones*, and hence the signification is transferred to those chiefs who assembled at places so set apart for holding councils. This reference is the more valuable, as it is, I believe, the earliest of the kind. The next may be that of Homer. Iliad 18, ver. 504.

Οι δε γερονλες
Ειαλ' επι ξεστοισι λιθοις ιερω εν κυκλω

The old men were seated by the wrought stones in the sacred circle.

In Stonehenge the place of dignity seems to have been marked simply by the size of the pillar. In Homer's time the pillar seems to have been wrought into somewhat of a regular form.

probably, poured out on or under the great altar. Moreover the most delicate part of the fat was also brought in and burnt as incense on the altar, with no small propriety, as in burning it seems to ascend towards the seat of the Divinity. The rest of the carcase was feasted upon by the sacrificers. Such being the manner of sacrificing in general, it is not extraordinary that no traces of fire are found on any of the stones at Stonehenge: the fat being, probably, burned in some kind of censer. As the custom of burying in sacred ground has no foundation in Christianity, but rather the reverse, as our Saviour was buried in *a garden*, this custom also must be referred to the practice of antiquity in the times of heathenism; and though the tradition that Stonehenge was raised to commemorate the massacre of British chiefs is certainly not true, yet that these chiefs were buried either within or near the temple may be so, as also, that barrows were raised over their remains as monuments; and that have been said, by an easy mistake, of the stones of the temple, which was true only of the barrows, or possibly of other stones

erected as memorials, but not now recognised as such. Strahlenberg, in his account of Russia, mentions his having seen circles of stones, which were said to mark places of interment, and that the bodies were buried under these stones, at a great depth from the surface of the earth. I think he says, from twelve to fourteen feet, and it might be, therefore, still worth while to examine whether any remains of interment could be found similarly situated at Stonehenge, though they could not be those of the British chiefs, as the temple is noticed by the Poet Aneurin, who escaped from the massacre. In some instances, the circles may have been those of burial only, and such, I suppose, the curiously intersecting circles at Botallet in St. Just's, Cornwall, and described by Borlase, to have been.

Another use of circles of stones, where they are small, was, probably, for the celebration of festival games, such as dancing, wrestling, &c., which were also, probably, festivals, religious ceremonies.

OF STONE PILLARS.

Of these, the little I have to say is rather to guard against mistakes than to give information. In many instances, they are, doubtless, memorials of a rude age; and of acts no longer remembered. But, as it is at this day a custom in the mountainous parts of Wales, to set up a tall stone on an eminence to direct the traveller, where the country is wild, and the road would otherwise in snowy weather be difficult to find; and as others of a lesser size, are sometimes set up for the cattle to rub themselves, it may be a prudent precaution to examine whether any pillar-like stone may have been set up for either of these purposes, before it be referred to any other.

OF MERLIN, THE REPUTED MAGICIAN

Two persons, of the name of Merlin, have obtained conspicuous places in the annals of the Welsh. The Caledonian Merlin, the author of some Druidical poems still in existence, and Merlin Ambrosius, the subject of the far-famed magician of romance, and, probably, the author of some portion of those prophecies, which stimulated the Welsh to a struggle for their rights, until they were happily amalgamated with those of England by the union. The account of his birth, as given by one of the writers of the history published by Geoffrey of Monmouth, is, probably, that of popular tradition, but wrought up into a somewhat more impressive form in the tales of the Troubadours. To them it was a professional, or at least a convenient idea, to attribute the birth of so eminent a magician to a supernatural

origin. It was justifying to the imagination of credulity every subsequent description of the wondrous efficacy of his art. The progeny of a demon who had violated the sanctuary of a religious order in the person of a nun, the mother of Merlin, must have been conceived, even as born of such parents, to be the devoted instrument of portentous effects,—for such was Merlin said to be. The place of his birth is said, in Welsh history, to have been Carmarthen, so called from *Caer* and *Myrdd*, and sygnifying, *the city of ten thousand* (soldiers), that is, of the legion. But, however just the derivation of the name of Carmarthen seems to be, and, I thought to be, when I published the translation of the Brut; a circumstance, which had not then occurred to my mind, induces me to believe, that the name and its derivation, have been substituted, by a mistake of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Carleon. Nennius says, that Merlin was born * "In campo

* Nennius, cap. 42. He says, it was "*In regione quæ vocatur Glevising.*" It is in the hundred of Gwaunllwg, of which *Glevising* is, perhaps, the error of the copyist.

" Electi," that is, *In the field of battle*, or, *Camp of Electus*. Now the Welsh for *campus Electi*, would be *maes Elect;* and not far from Carleon there is a village, called, in Welsh, *Maes*aleg, and commonly, at present, Bassaleg. On a comparison of these names, the true reading of Nennius would be, " In campo Allecti," that is, *In the camp or field of battle of Allectus*, the Roman general; and this being the birth-place of Merlin, according to Nennius, the *city of the ten thousand* must, necessarily, have been Carleon, in this instance. The mistake of Geoffrey may have been caused by an explanation of the word *lleon*, that is, *legion*, in his original. It may now, on these circumstances, be assumed, that the birth-place of this celebrated character was Bassaleg, in Monmouthshire; and not, as the general opinion has prevailed, Carmarthen.

There is a kind of prejudice which pleases itself with the idea, that the birth and infancy of extraordinary characters are distinguished by some unusual circumstances, indicative of their future no-

toriety: and the prejudice is not wholly without foundation as to the latter, in which the first developing of the character often affords a clue to its subsequent pre-eminence; neither could the prejudice have been so readily acquiesced in, had not the fact sometimes seemed at least to justify it sufficiently for the purposes of the poet and the biographer. Hence the biographers of Merlin, esteeming him to be a magician, and, of course, potent in diabolical arts, have, in general, recorded him as the unhallowed issue of a demon and a nun; of an origin as monstrous, as his power was conceived to be super-natural and profane. This, however, appears to be the exaggeration of later writers of the Romish church, in order to discredit his prophecies; for Nennius, who wrote in the eighth century, says no more than that "he * was an illegitimate child whose "mother, fearing that, if she acknow-"ledged an illicit connexion, the king "would put her to death, made oath that "he had no father." He, probably, was

Chap. 42.

illegitimate, and the mother, so far the more proper for the part she was called, and no doubt well instructed, to perform.

The idle narrative hitherto given, of his being brought into notice, has little that is satisfactory in its usual form; but the probable result of a consideration of all the circumstances is as follows.

The situation of Vortigern's affairs was, at this time, extremely, but deservedly, disastrous. Duped by his Saxon allies, and hated by the Britons for his attachment to the Saxons, dreading the effects which the just irritation of his own indignant people, after the treacherous massacre of the British chiefs at Stonehenge, might produce, he had fled to the recesses of Snowdon for security; and probably, also, as neither the influence nor the credit of the Druids was extinct, with a hope of engaging them in his favour. There seems also to have been another reason. Vortigern cannot reasonably be accused of entertaining any religious principle; and they who have no religious principle are,

when in difficulties, the most superstitious. Endeavouring to console or encourage themselves by a principle of fatalism, their anxiety to know whether they have any thing to hope, or to know the worst, becomes a torment, and they apply with eagerness to any one whose plausible confidence and artifice has acquired an imaginary credit for a power of exploring the secrets of fate. With such an anxiety is Vortigern said to have applied to the Bards of Snowdon. But as the Bards were probably too wise to be gained over to his cause, and no less his enemies, it required no great artifice to render his design of building a fort ineffectual in a district where their influence was absolute, or to play upon the agitated mind of the king; and if as it seems, they were apprised of, and connected with, the intended landing of Ambrosius and Uther, the sons of Constantine, in order to dethrone Vortigern, it was an object to detain him there, and, at the same time, to prevent the building of the fort. Their declaration that the fort*

* Dr. Jamieson, in his History of the Culdees, relates a similar traditional anecdote; from which it should seem,

could not be built, unless the mortar were cemented with the blood of a child who had no father, seems to have been given with this view, and I am inclined to believe that the king perceived it, and, knowing Merlin to be brought up at Car-

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that the sacrifice of a human victim was thought by the Druids a necessary propitiation, when the commencement of an undertaking was not successful. The anecdote is this:—"When Columba first attempted to build on Iona, "the walls, as it is said, by the operation of some evil "spirit, *fell down as fast as they were erected.* Columba "received *supernatural* intimation that they would never "stand unless *a human victim was buried alive.* Accord- "ing to one account, the lot fell on Oran, the com- "panion of the saint, as the victim that was demanded "for the success of the undertaking. Others pretend, "that Oran voluntarily devoted himself, and was interred "accordingly. At the end of three days, Columba had the "curiosity to take a farewel look at his old friend, and "caused the earth to be removed. Oran raised his swim- "ming eyes, and said, 'There is no wonder in death, and "'hell is not as it is reported.' The saint was so shocked "at this impiety, that he instantly ordered the earth to be "flung in again, uttering the words of the proverb," viz., "*Earth, Earth, on the mouth of Oran, that he may blab "no more.*" Page 20.

The traditions of Wales and Scotland, and particularly those of the legendary kind, have, in many instances, so near a connexion as to demonstrate the same origin, and to throw light the one on the other.

leon with care, though as the child of no acknowledged father, and, suspecting him to be the son of Ambrosius, whether legitimate or not; sent for him thither in order to be revenged on the Bards for the death of the child, which the Bards, no doubt discovering, prevented, by giving the child instructions to perform his part, and, by some ceremonial illusions, which enabled them to secure the safety of the child, and impress the mind of Vortigern with apprehensions for his own safety if he remained there. To this purpose the giving to Merlin the prophetic character which the Bards themselves claimed was admirably adapted, and when the immediate purpose had been obtained; it was a character which remained with Merlin for the rest of his life. The impressions which extraordinary circumstances make on a young mind are durable, and something of the effect, combined with sagacity and the learning of the times, seems to have formed and established his subsequent character, and confirmed his reputation. This idea of his being a son of Ambrosius is not merely conjectural, though it was originally the

the result of the above consideration of circumstances: it is in a great measure confirmed by Nennius in chap. 44, who says, that when Merlin had concluded his explanation of the ominous representation, Vortigern demanded his name, to which Merlin replied, "My name is Ambrosius."* Then said the king, "Of what family art "thou?" He replied, † "One of the Ro- "man consuls is my father."

The detail given by the British chronicle of Merlin's answers to Vortigern and the Bards, is in some respects difficult to be understood, as it relates to Druidic superstitions, of which no satisfactory account, that I know of, has been transmitted. The scene is laid at Dinas Emrys, where

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* Nennius adds here Embreis glentic (Emrys gwledig) esse "videbatur." This may signify, *He was thought to be Ambrosius the Royal:* or the name AMBROSIUS *was thought to signify* ROYAL. The latter seems to be the sense intended here.

† The Roman consuls here intended were not properly such, but noblemen, or chieftains of Roman origin, viz., the two brothers Ambrosius and Constantine, who claimed a descent from Constantine the Great.

Vortigern intended to build his fort. Dinas Emrys signifies the city of * Emrys, and as Stonehenge is also called Gwaith Emrys, that is, *the work of emrys*, or cor emrys, that is, *the circle*, or, *choir of emrys*· the intent of both were, probably, of the same kind, that is, I believe, as places of solemn assembly, convoked by the sovereign, whether of Bards or chieftains. † Here Merlin is said to have upbraided the Bards with their ignorance, and the cruelty of their suggestions. As a proof of the former, ‡ "Tell me," said he, (referring to the place where the fort was constructed, and on which there were

* Or *of Royalty.*] See note * page 65.

† Collectanea Cambrica, Vol. I. p. 120.

‡ Nennius gives the description of this exhibition with some variations. He says the dragons, or, as he calls them, worms, were found in a tent (probably a kind of shrine) inclosed in *two* vessels. I suppose he means that one of these vessels contained the other, and that *the tent* was in the inner vessel. He also adds, that the red worm drove the white out of the tent into the water, and that this *tent* signified the kingdom of Vortigern, which at the time was possessed both by Britons and Saxons, and "that the pond denoted the world; more probably the ocean."

rushes) " what is below that heap of " rushes?" When the Bards acknowledged their ignorance, he desired that the rushes might be cleared away, and there appeared a large pool of water. " Now," said the boy to them, " Tell me what is in that " lake?" They answered, " We know " not." " Then drain the lake," said he, " and, at the bottom, you will find a stone " chest, in which there are two sleeping " dragons. These, whenever they awake, " fight with each other, and it is their vio- " lence that shakes the ground, and " causes the work to fall." The Bards, however, were unable to drain the lake, and Merlin effected it, by letting it out in five streams. Vortigern now commanded the stone chest to be opened, and out of it there came a white and a red dragon; which immediately began a fierce battle. At first the white dragon drove the red one to the middle of the pool, then the red one, provoked to rage, drove the white one thither in turn. Vortigern now asked what this should signify, and Merlin exclaimed, " Woe to the red dragon, for her calamity " draws nigh, and the white dragon shall

" seize on her cells. By the white dragon
" the Saxons are signified, and the Britons
" by the red one, which the white shall
" shall overcome. Then shall the moun-
" tains be made plains, and the glens and
" rivers flow with blood. * The Saxons
" shall possess almost all the island from
" sea to sea, and afterwards our nation
" shall arise, and bravely drive the Saxons
" beyond the sea."

Such was the appearance exhibited, and the prophetic exposition: which, though naturally suggested by the hopes and fears prevalent at the time, made a deep and lasting impression on the minds of the nation to whom it was addressed.

When the conference was over, Vortigern, according to Nennius, made a grant to Merlin of a fort, and the western provinces, which, probaby, means no more than that he left the Bards in possession of Carnarvonshire, as he himself hastily withdrew to South Wales, where, in his

* Nennius, chap. 43.

fort, which was in Monmouthshire, he was burned to death, in the burning of the fort by Ambrosius.

About this time, or at the conference, Merlin is said to have delivered what bears the name of his Great Prophecy, from its reputed importance. That, however, which has been published as such, is of no sufficient authority. Some passages of it are quoted by Giraldus Cambrensis, as traditional, others have, probably, been interpolated to make it conformable to real history. It is, however, so far useful as being, in some degree, a confirmation of the history.

On the death of Vortigern, Merlin appears to have returned to the neighbourhood of his native place, and to have chosen the delightful retirement of the vale of Euas, at a later period, adorned by Lanthoni Abbey, for his studies. From hence he is said to have been sent for by Ambrosius the Great, in order to give the plan of a monument to be erected in memory of the British chiefs massacred by

the treachery of the Saxons on Salisbury plain. Men of profound studies, and ingenious powers and research, have, in all dark ages, been thought to hold a communication with beings of another world. To an ignorant mind the most satisfactory, as well as the readiest mode of accounting to itself and others, for a seclusion for which it is itself unfit; and for scientific discoveries, of which it can neither trace nor divine the origin, is to attribute them to the converse and communication of some beings of the invisible world; and any exhibitions of a surprising kind, though merely effects of natural knowledge and ingenuity, would be, of course, attributed to the power of such beings, and, if exhibited at pleasure by the artist, he would be conceived to have a power over them, by the means of either some superior being, or a compact of a tremendous nature. The latter idea is, perhaps, peculiar to the Christians, who applied a metaphorical expression of Scripture literally. If Merlin, therefore, was, as he appears to have been, a man of uncommon endowments, well versed in Bardic science, and perhaps, attached to their

religion, the tale of tradition would have sufficient grounds for attributing magical powers to him: and, as Stonehenge was originally constructed upon scientific principles, and, no doubt, with awful ceremonies, and was also distinguished by the epithet of Emrys, it is not surprising that the tradition should ascribe the construction to Merlin. Hence, in order to raise a monument worthy of the occasion, Merlin is said to have advised the king to send, not as it has been usually been said, to Kildare, but to Killara, which is in the county of Meath, in Ireland, for a circle of stones, and transport them to Salisbury Plain. The tradition proceeds to state, that the plan being, on its first proposal, ridiculed by the king, Merlin persisted in his plan. "Laugh not, sire," said he, "for my "words are in seriousness and in truth. "Those stones are of various efficacy and "medicinal powers, and were brought "thither formerly by the heroes from "Spain, who placed them as they are at "at present. Their motive for bringing "them was this:—In cases of sickness they "medicated the stone, and poured water

" on it, and this water cured any dis-
" order." The king, informed of the efficacy of the stone, immediately determined upon the expedition, and sent out Uther Pendragon, accompanied by Merlin, and at the head of fifteen thousand men, to fetch them. After having gained a battle over the Irish forces, Uther and his men proceeded to Killara, and here the powers of Merlin were signally displayed. The army having in vain attempted to move the stones, Merlin, by his art alone, drew them freely and without labour to the ships, and thus they were brought, says the history, to Ambri, that is, Stonehenge.

Here are almost to a certainty, two distinct traditions confounded together, and an error as to the real object of the expedition. That the raising some monument, or perhaps the solemn interment of the remains of the chiefs, was one motive for the assemby on Salisbury Plain is probable, but, as I have already said in the Collectanea Cambrica, I am persuaded the principal motive was to settle the succession

to the sovereignty, and other public affairs; and the great object of the expedition seems to have been the fatal stone on which the Irish kings were crowned: which Merlin, wishing to restore the power of Druidism, may have suggested; and he, therefore, would probably take a leading part in the enterprise, and make the removal to seem miraculously the effect of his art. As it was, I presume, brought to Stonehenge, this was sufficient, when the real fact was forgotten, to build the tradition of his having brought the immense stones which form the temple there. Though the history first mentions the circle of stones, yet it is remarkable, that in describing the medicinal virtues, these, in the oldest copy, are attributed to *a single stone*, which seems to confirm the conjecture.

The next occasion on which Merlin is noticed, is upon the appearance of a comet, about the time of the death of Ambrosius, when he was required to explain the intent of what was in those ages, supposed to be so portentous an event.

This he did with equal policy and ingenuity, having had, as is most likely, private notice of the death of Abrosius, so as to ensure the succession to the sovereignty to Uther. He burst out into an exclamation, that Ambrosius was dead, and, having bewailed the loss that Britain must sustain by his death, declared that the comet was significant of the fate of Uther and his son. The head of the comet, by the imagination of the multitude, was conceived to resemble a dragon, and this work of fancy was profitably converted to an important advantage. "Thou, Uther," said Merlin, "art signified by this star "with the head of a dragon. By the "beam pointing towards France is de-"noted a son of thine, who shall be great "in wealth, and extensive in sway, and "by that directed towards Ireland a "daughter, whose descendants shall suc-"successively govern the whole." The result was, as might be expected, Uther was elected sovereign, and is said, from this circumstance, to have borne a dragon as his standard, and to have had the surname of Pendragon, that is, *The Dragon's head.*

Another exploit attributed to Merlin is far from doing honour to his memory, it being the transformation of Uther and his servant Ulphen, into the resemblances of Gorlais, Earl of Cornwall, and his servant, in order to enable Uther to deceive the wife of the earl. This part of the story, however, bears so strong a resemblance to that of David and Uriah, and is so apparently intended to stigmatize the birth of Arthur, who was the son of Uther, that it can be esteemed only the idle fiction of a monk, or of a romance writer.

Whether Merlin survived Arthur or not has not been recorded in history, but it is most probable that he did, and through some apprehension of the Saxons endeavoured to escape them by sea. On this occasion he is said to have sailed in a ship of glass, and to have taken with him the thirteen precious curiosities of Britain. According to the account of this voyage given by Mr. Lewis Morris, he conveyed them to Bardsey Island, and died and was buried there, which is very probable; though

one of the Triads says, that after he had sailed he was never heard of more, which, if the writer of the Triad lived in South Wales, might well be true *there*, considering the remote and unfrequented situation of Bardsey. The thirteen curiosities, with the explanation of the names or properties as given by Mr. Morris, are as follow.

1. Llen Arthur, *(the veil of Arthur,)* which made the person who put it on invisible.

2. Dyrnwyn.

3. Corn Brangaled, *(the horn of Brangaled,)* which furnished any liquor desired.

4. Cadair, neu carr Morgan mwynfawr, *(the chair, or car of Morgan mwynfawr,)* which would carry a person seated in it wherever he wished to go.

5. Mwys Gwyddno, *(the hamper of Gwyddno,)* meat for one being put into it, would become meat for a hundred.

6. Hogalen Tudno, *(the whetstone of Tudno,)* which would sharpen none but the weapon of a brave man.

7. Pais Padarn, *(the cloak of Padarn.)*

8. Pair Dyrnog, *(the caldron of Dyrnog,)* none but the meat of a brave man would boil in it.

9. Dysgyl a gren Rhydderch, *(the dish and platter of Rhydderch,)* any meat desired would appear on it.

10. Tawlbwrdd, *(a chess board,* or, rather *backgammon board,)* the ground gold, and the men silver, and the men would play themselves.

11. Mantell, *(a robe.)*

12. Madrwy Eluned, *(the ring of Eluned,)* whoever put it on could make himself invisible at pleasure.

13. Cyllel Llawfrodedd, *(the knife or dagger of Llawfrodedd.)*

Of the second of these Mr. Morris, I suppose, found no explanation, nor can I offer any thing that is satisfactory, the eleventh seems to have signified a magic robe; the last means, perhaps, the dagger of Druidic vengeance, as llawfrodedd may be interpreted, *the hand of havoc.*

The magical powers assigned to some of these curiosities are so similar to what is found in the Arabian tales, as to point

out a common origin of great antiquity. The ship of glass is, by the author of the mythology of the Druids, ingeniously explained as signifying a sacred vessel, emblematic of the ark and the name of Bangor Wydrin, or *Glass Bangor*, an ancient name of Glastonbury, confirms the idea of Wydr, literally *glass*, signifying *sacred*. I believe gwydr, in these instances, has no connexion with, or relation to, the same sound when signifying glass, but that its true signification is sacred, though not now so used.

Here the tradition of Merlin ends. Of his art some traditionary information seems long to have remained, and the characters of poet, prophet, and magician, have been assigned to Robin Du of the 14th century. The most noted was, however, the celebrated Dr. John Dee, whose real character has not, I think, been well understood. His learning is acknowledged, and a volume of his works published without the least apprehension of what they most probably contain: viz., the negociations of his time, in which he was employed in

foreign courts. *The stone*, or *magic mirror*, seems in this book, though to the ignorant he shewed a piece of cannal coal, or a polished glass as such occasionally, really meant *the cypher*, which he used; *the spirits*, the *letters*, or *communications;* and the *fumigations*, the offers of advantage. It is, I think, most probable, that the utility of such men under a fictitious character, so well adapted to the gaining of intelligence and conveying it safely, that astrologers and dealers in the *Black Art*, as it was called, found such protection: and it may have been in revenge for the defeat of some political project that Dee's library was destroyed. Kelly seems to have betrayed him; he at least deserted him. The cyphers used by Dee are still, I believe, in the British Museum.

But to return to Merlin. His fame has pervaded the gloom of barbarous ages, and his mighty magic adorned the tales of romance, and given splendour to theatric exhibitions, and when every abatement is made for the extravagance of popular

opinion, enough will remain to make it credible that one, whose name has been so transmitted, must have been a man of no common endowments.

OF KING ARTHUR.

If history has been despoiled of the greater portion of that applause which it seems once to have consecrated to the memory of this prince, tradition has been fondly credulous in transmitting his name to posterity adorned by every effort of the imagination, as that of the first of knights, the flower of courtesy, the mirror of sovereigns, and the idol of his people. And when every allowance is made for the decoration of the tale by the minstrel, or the exaggerations of popular narrative, still he must have been a prince of no common talent and attractions, whose fame has been so cherished by the nation he governed. A French poet has described Henry the Fourth of France but too generally, except as to France, as being, " Seul roi dont le peuple n'ai pas oublie le nom," *The only king whose name is not forgotten by the populace.* The same may be said, with nearly the same truth, as to the popu-

larity of the name of Arthur amongst the Welsh. It has in a great measure eclipsed every other. Neither were the characters of Arthur and Henry dissimilar. It was not valour, or wisdom, or liberality, or success, merely, that won the affections of the people; these may all unite in one character, the advantages be felt and acknowledged, and yet make no lasting impression; it was that spontaneous grace which a liveliness of wit and spirit, and real benevolence, threw over every action, which cheered in the midst of danger, and enlivened in the hour of mirth; could occasionally condescend without losing its dignity, and in its own happiness made that of the people a primary ingredient. Such was the *Artus fortis et facetus*, the witty and spirited Arthur of tradition.

The notices, which are afforded by the Welsh Chronicle, usually called the Brut, are in some parts, obscured apparently by the wish of the writer, or some of the transcribers, to suppress all reference to Druidism, and rendered less credible by an addition, or interpolation of circum-

stances borrowed by a later writer, probably from the compositions of the minstrels of the ninth or tenth century. Still, however, comparing the written with the oral traditions, a considerable portion of the obscurity will be removed, and the principal events of his life given, without making any violent demand on the faith of the reader, so as to be probably the truth, or very nearly so.

At the time of the birth of Arthur the state of Britain was, in several respects, a very unhappy one. The power of the Saxons continually increased from their first arrival by the successive influx of new hordes of adventurers into the realm, had established itself strongly on the south-eastern counties, and the progress of the contest extended towards the Severn and the Humber, near which last the most important battle of this period was fought. But though the early historians seem to have thought it due to their attachment to Christianity to pass over any great conflict between its professors and those who ad-

hered to Druidism, yet it is certain such did exist, and the dissensions of the Britons as to religion must have greatly favoured the enterprises of the Saxons, whose success is not upon any other supposition easily accounted for in its full extent. From the preceding transactions at Stonehenge, it should seem that Druidism had gained some advantage there, and that somewhat of a renewal of its rites had taken place under the superintendence of Merlin, who had, perhaps, brought back with him from Ireland some of its exiled priests, and with them the formularies of their worship. If this was the case, it was probably the last time of its celebration when Ambrosius was made sovereign, as there is no reference to any such in the succeeding reign, though Merlin in the beginning of it is said to have interpreted the prognostication of the comet. It is rather probable that Druidism was again on the decline. Thus much it appeared necessary to premise; and we may now enter on the history of our hero with a clearer view of the subject.

According to Nennius, this prince was the son of Uther Pendragon, which this historian states simply without any imputation of illegitimacy; and though it must be confessed, that what Nennius wrote has been dreadfully curtailed and corrupted, yet had he dropped a hint that could have tended to the prejudice of Arthur's fame, there can be little doubt but that it would have been carefully preserved. It is therefore the more probable, that the anecdote of an adulterous intrigue of Uther with the wife of Gorlais, Earl of Cornwall, the consequence whereof was the birth of Arthur, is the fabrication of a later writer than the author of the history. Even had it not been so, it was by the Welsh laws in the power of the father, by a public acknowledgment in presence of the heads of his family, to confer legitimacy on an otherwise illegitimate child.

According to the *Morte Arthur*, when this prince was born, Merlin desired that the child should be delivered to him *unbaptized*, but that he had him baptized

before he delivered him to Sir Hector for his education. This intimates that he was educated in the principles of Druidism, and (perhaps on the death of Merlin) became a Christian. The Sir Hector of the romance, or Sir Autour, as he is called in the Life of Merlin, is, in the Welsh tale, called Cynhyrgain the bearded, the foster-father of Arthur, by whom he was instructed and brought forward to act upon the great scene which was to prove so renowned.

The death of Uther, when Arthur was about fifteen, or as Higden more probably states it, about eighteen years of age, embarrassed the British nobility much as to their choice of a successor; because of the youth of Arthur. In such cases it had been usual to elect the next of kin able to undertake the government; but at this time the promising hopes of the talents and spirit of the young prince, and possibly the concurrence of different parties as to one whose youth might open to each a prospect of attaching him to itself, decided in his favour. To give the decision

a supernatural sanction in the eyes of the multitude. The artifice was simple, and the result easily effected by predetermination or compact. At Wintchester, or more probably Silchester, there was said to be a stone, * in a cleft whereof was lodged a sword; and on the stone an inscription, the purport of which was, that he who could draw that sword out of the cleft was the right heir to the sovereignty of Britain. This, according to the tradition, none of the chieftains who were assembled could effect. At this time it chanced that the son of Arthur's foster-father in a contest broke his sword, and Arthur, recollecting the sword in the stone, ran for it, and drew it out with ease. The foster-brother knowing the importance of the sword, preferred his own claim upon the evidence of the sword, but, it being judged proper that the sword should be replaced in the cleft, and the experiment repeated, it was found that Arthur only could draw it out again, and

* In the myddes thereof was lyk an anvyld of steel a ffote of hyght, and therein stake a fayre sword. *Morte Arthur.*

thus his title was established. That this manœuvre was Druidical the circumstances are sufficiently convincing, and though London and Winchester are, by different writers, mentioned as the scene of the transaction, it is more probable that it was either at Silchester or Stonehenge, as the one was a station of the army, the other of the national assembly, which is most likely to have been the place for that reason. The ceremony of the coronation is said to have been performed by Dubricius, archbishop of Carleon; and it may be inferred from its being so said, that the religious differences were, for a time, composed, in order to unite for the expulsion of the common enemy. The effect of such an union was soon felt by the Saxons; whom, according to Nennius, Arthur, at the head of his countrymen, defeated in twelve pitched battles, in each of which he displayed a prowess and sagacity far beyond his years. The last, and most celebrated, was the battle of Baddon-hill, near Bath, in which he is said to have killed upwards of six hundred with his own hand. In this battle Arthur is said to have worn

a device called *Prydwen*, either on his helm, or his shield, and the sword Caliburn, which was made at Glastonbury. The device is said, in one copy of the Chronicle, to have been *a cross;* in another and later copy, *an image of the Virgin.* These are the interpretations of the writers, but, I am afraid, the name of the device proves that, at this time, Arthur was attached to Druidism, for it has, I think, been sufficiently proved, that it signifies *the* * *sacred ship*, or *symbol of the ark of Noah*, exhibited in the Druidic ceremonies: and William of Malmesbury has very unconsciously proved, that there was an establishment of a Druidical society at Glastonbury in this very period, having conceived it to be that of a Christian monastery. As the explanation is necessary to the history of the far-famed Caliburn, it may not be deemed superfluous to introduce it here. According to this author †, "twelve of the descendants of Cunedda, "coming from the north, took possession

* Mythol. of the Druids. Page 517.

† De Ant. Glast. Apud Gale. Page 295.

" of Venedotia, Demetia, Buthir, (Guhir,
" or Gower,) and Kedweli, in right of
" their great grandfather," (others say their father,) " Cunedda. One of them
" was called Glasteing, and this," says Malmesbury, " was that Glasteing, who,
" pursuing his *sow* through the midland
" territory of the Angles by the town of
" Escebtiorne, (*qu.* Shepton Mallet,) to
" Wells, and from Wells, along a wet by-
" road, which we call Sugewege, *(Sow-
" way,)* found her suckling her young
" under an *apple*-tree near the church we
" are speaking of: (viz., *Glastonbury)* and
" hence we even yet call the apples of that
" tree, *old-church apples.* The sow also
" was called, the old-church sow, because,
" though that other swine had but four
" legs, she had *eight.* Here Glasteing
" finding the situation advantageous in
" many respects, fixed the habitation of
" himself and family, and here he died."

A story of the same kind is told in the Welsh Triads, and Cambrian Biography of Coll ap Coll Frewi, following the sow of Dallwaran Dalben, from Gwent in South

Wales to Lleyn in Carnarvonshire. The author of the Mythology of the Druids *, considers the *sow* as symbolical of the ark, and it is remarkable that Malmesbury characterizes the *sow* of Glasteing as having had *eight* feet. As in the Welsh language *hwch* signifies a *sow*, and *cwch* a *boat*, I strongly suspect, that the former name was adopted to disguise the mystery: as approximating sufficiently in sound to intimate the sense to the initiated. The *sow* then with *eight* feet represented the *boat*, that is, the *ark*, with its *eight supporters*, or *eight priests*, as *representatives* of the *eight persons* saved in the ark; and these were what Glasteing found reposing under the *apple-tree*, a representative also, I presume, of the *tree of life*. When the boat was called a sow, for the same reason would its priests be called its *pigs*, whether for concealment by the friends, or in derision by the enemies, of the superstition.

Hence then it appears, that in the fifth or even sixth century (for Cunedda died

* Page 481.

at the close of the fourth) there was an establishment of Druids at Glastonbury, and, as the mighty sword Caliburn was wrought there, the reason of its having been so, was evidently to give it the credit of magic power, which no enemy could withstand, a credit which, in the hand of an Arthur, it was likely to sustain; and which the minstrel did not suffer to fall into oblivion.

The victory at Baddon-hill was of great importance to the British cause, and it is not improbable that many of the fugitives were pursued and driven to embark, having lost their leaders, or it being rumoured that they were slain, as the Welsh Chronicle states. The expressions of this Chronicle are too general to be taken strictly, and the fact seems to be as Higden has stated it: that a peace was concluded between Arthur and Cerdic, upon the conditions that Arthur, ceding Wessex to Cerdic, should retain the title and privilege of sovereign paramount.

The interval between the conclusion of

this peace, and Arthur's war with the Picts and Scots, as well as the motives to this war, are omitted by the Chronicle. Tradition has, however, preserved some circumstances from which, though involved in the fabulous guise of popular stories; some probable account may be elicited.

From what has been said it may be assumed, that Arthur was hitherto a votary of Druidism; but Christianity was, at the same time, making a rapid progress, and Druidism seeking shelter in the mountains of Snowdon, the recesses of Anglesey and Somersetshire. Arthur, now at peace with his neighbours, seems to have given himself up for some time to the idle and dangerous pursuits of youthful pleasures, and for those of the chace, to have made choice of Caerwys and Nannerch, in Flintshire, in North Wales. An anecdote of him whilst there may be seen in page 359 of the Collectanea Cambrica, Vol. I., which will justify this opinion. In the mean time his people became dissatisfied, and he is said to have dreamed that his hair fell from his head, his fingers from his hands,

and his toes from his feet, and having required an explanation of the dream was told, that his dominion was falling from him, and could be recovered only by means of a lion in steel, the entreaty of a blossom, and the advice of an old man. The dream may have been an invention to conceal secret intelligence, that his subjects were, as is usual in such cases, failing in their attachment; and could only be recovered when the lion should be clad in steel; when the monarch should arm, and exert himself for their safety. The two remaining particulars seem to present a choice of the parties of Druids or Christians. This I conceive from the explanation given of the second and third. Of the second it is said, that being separated from his train in the chace he lost his way, and coming to the mouth of a cave entered it, and found within three gigantic beings, viz., an old woman, and her son and daughter. The mother and son wishing, lest their retreat should be discovered, to put Arthur to death; the daughter by her entreaties prevailed so far, that the mother agreed to spare his life, if next

morning he should be able to deliver a triad of truths. The conditions being accepted Arthur was well entertained, the son played also exquisitely on the harp to amuse him. But when Arthur went to repose, the son laid over him an ox-hide so heavy that he could not move under it, but was confined by it till the son came in the morning to take it off. Arthur then delivered his triad of truths. Addressing the son, " You," said he, " are the best harper " I ever heard." ' True!' said the old woman. " And you," said he to her, " are " the ugliest hag I ever saw." ' True ' again!' said she. " If I were once from " hence I would never come hither again," said he. The truth of this was allowed, and Arthur set free.

In this tale the description of the hag, her son, and daughter, correspond with that of the Druidic deities,—Ceridwen, the prototype of witches, her son Avagddu, and her beautiful daughter Flur, called in romance Blanche Fleur; as also Arthur's imprisonment under the ox-hide, to that of the aspirants previous to their initiation

into the mysteries. The tale, therefore, intimates that Arthur was initiated, but conceived a disgust and hatred for the Druidical superstition, and perhaps, in consequence of some menacing apparitions exhibited which his mind was too well informed to regard, and too spirited to bear, as he could not be wholly ignorant of Christianity. It is dangerous to trifle with a sound understanding, and so the Druids seem to have found it. The advice of the old man is said to have been that of a hermit, and the purport of it was to rebuild, or restore the churches which had been destroyed by the Pagans; under the name Pagans, Druids, as well as Saxons, may have been comprehended; for as the Christian churches were generally built on the site of old Pagan temples, the Druids, no doubt, had endeavoured, when able, to destroy them. But their power was now falling, never more to rise. The light of Christianity was dispelling the mist and darkness of ignorance which shrouded its spells in horrors, and creating an abhorrence of the bloody sacrifices and superstitious delusions of Druidism.

It has been ingeniously conjectured by a learned Welsh antiquary from a comparison of circumstances, and names of places given in the romance of the Sangreal, that the borders of the Menai were the scenes of contest between Arthur and the Druids. What the Sangreal was in itself has been much doubted. In the romance itself the Sangreal is evidently described as a kind of cup, and * in the passage referred to above, I have given my reasons for thinking it to have been, what I believe it was, the celebrated *Santo Catino*, now in Paris, a beautiful cup of a composition (probably glass) resembling an emerald. The word *Graal* is said, by Mr. Lewis Morris, on the authority of the Speculum Historicum of Vincentius, to be derived from Gradale, an old French word signifying *a little dish;* and this seems to be the true signification. Was it originally *a divining cup* of the Druids? That divining cups were of the remotest antiquity we know from the history of Joseph, and a vestige of that kind of divination is yet

* Collectanea Camb. Vol. I. P. 309.

observable in the practice of divining by the coffee or tea cup. If the Sangreal were such a cup, it would have been considered, when obtained by conquest, as the noblest trophy of the victory of Christians over the Druids; and, therefore, might have been represented as the object of the war itself. Of course the vessel would be deposited in the place of the greatest security; and whether this conjecture concerning its original history be, or be not, well founded; that the *Santo Catino* was at St. David's, and stolen and carried off from thence to Glastonbury, with other valuables, cannot now, I think, be doubted. I am not without some suspicion, that during the establishment of the Druids at Glastonbury, the *Catino*, or Sangreal, had been preserved there, and that it was from the celebrity of this vessel the place took the name of Ynys Wydrin, or *the isle (or district)* of the Little Glass, and that Merlin, when he went to Bardsey, sailed not indeed in it, but with it, that is, carried it with him thither; and that it was recovered by Arthur, and consecrated to the use of the church by

St. David. The supposition gives at least something like a clue to the * romance of the Sangreal; but, if correct, it does not admit of the idea, that it was the same as the *Altar of St. David*, which that saint is said to have brought from Jerusalem, unless it be thought, that this was the altar of St. David's, and not a divining cup, and had been carried off by the Druids and recovered from them; a supposition which appears to me less probable than the former.

The next transaction noticed by the Chronicle, is an expedition conducted by Arthur against *the Picts*, according to which it appears that he was victorious in three engagements. After the last battle, the Picts are said to have retired to the isles of *Loch Lomond*. Whilst the Picts were in this situation, an army under an Irish or Erse chieftain, came over to the assistance

* The name of *Launcelot* du Lac, the Knight of the Sangreal, seems referable to that of Pedrogyl *Paladrddellt*, or *Pedrogyl of the shivered* LAUNCE, one of the knights of Arthur mentioned in the Triads.

of the Picts, and was routed and compelled by Arthur to return to Ireland: and Arthur, at the entreaty of his nobles and clergy, received the submission of the Picts to his government, and pardoned their former opposition to him. In the narrative of these events the historian has, in rather a confused manner, introduced a very short and fabulous account of Loch Lomond, which Arthur went to view when the peace was concluded. But as it is evident this lake was the last retreat of these Picts, as the historian terms them, this is a strong argument, that they were in reality the party of the Druids, and as Arthur was able to explore the lake, that their sacred places were entered and subverted at this time, and that it was thought prudent to substitue the name of Picts for Druids, in the same manner as that of Pelagians probably is in the legend of Germanus.

This view of the subject is not only consistent with the subsequent part of the history, but is almost necessary to elucidate it, as Arthur, immediately after this

battle, is stated to have returned to York, and to have re-established the Christian churches which had been injured or thrown down, and appointed an archbishop of York. His victory seems also to have tranquillized his dominions, as he now appointed also subordinate earls or princes of Scotland. At this time the peace with his Saxon neighbours continuing, he married Gwenhwyfar, daughter of the Earl of Cornwall, then esteemed the most beautiful of the British ladies; and some time after his marriage, whether from that spirit of adventure common in his time, or to employ his retainers, he built a fleet, sailed to Ireland, and from thence towards some isle, as it should seem, of the Hebrides. In a second voyage he extended his course northwards around Great Britain, and as the northern isles were probably peopled by Norwegians, or, perhaps, because it was really the fact, he is said to have reached Norway. As he is represented as victorious through the whole course of this voyage, it may have been successful, whatever was its real object; whether retaliation, investigation, or acquisiton, of what

was then deemed the honourable advantage of adventure. On his return he is said to have overcome one Frollo, or Rollo, at Paris. But the Paris of the Chronicle is Calais, or Witsan (the name being a mistake of the translator), and that such an encounter should have taken place there, is no way improbable. Between these two voyages an interval of twelve years of peace is interposed by this writer, during which the court of Arthur became the resort of men of talents and celebrity; his fame increased to an eminent degree of splendour; and he was himself excited to an ambition of universal conquest, by the complimentary adulation paid to his merits. This is too like the exaggeration of a romancer to gain full credit; but as he was in peace with his Saxon neighbours, he may have contemplated and performed the circumnavigation of the whole island, a labour of enterprise and difficulty in his time, which alone might justify, to a great degree, the exalted reputation his name has acquired. The second expedition is said to have taken up nine years, including in this time a con-

siderable portion passed in Gaul. According to Johannes Magnus, a Swedish historian *, "Harold, leader of the Danes, "being overthrown in battle by Tordo, "king of Sweden, fled to Britain to king "Arthur, to collect succours in defence "of his nation, which were granted, and "a large fleet was assembled from Britain, "Gaul, and Holland, and sent to the "rescue of the Danes." The historian, however, adds, that "Arthur having at "the head of the combined forces gained "the victory, the Danes found a like op-"pression, under which they were long re-"tained, not only from the Angles and "Scots, but also from the Norwegians, "Arthur having made his relation Loth "their chief, as the Scottish history testi-"fies."

If this account be correct, the exploits of Arthur will assume a higher character than they have hitherto held in general estimation, and considering the confused,

* Hole's Arthur. Note to Book V. P. 162. Ed. Lond. 1789.

and perhaps, deserted state of the northern countries at this time, when the great irruption of the Northern nations was bearing down on the Roman empire, it is no great concession to grant that much of that might be true, as to Norway and Denmark, which is well known to have been true as to the more powerful and populous country of Britain. Countries drained of their warriors present an easy conquest to their invaders. The expedition may, however, have had an ulterior object, which seems to be intimated by Arthur's landing in Gaul; the more probable object is the transportation of troops from the north to reinforce the armies engaged with the Romans, an object which would require the junction and united aid of such a fleet as Magnus describes; and for which, as against a common foe, the northern nations had found it as necessary as it was eventually profitable to unite.

When Arthur had returned from Gaul he made Carleon the seat of his residence, which clearly marks that the Saxons were

still in possession of the eastern districts. Here he is said to have once more devoted himself to the enjoyments of a more tranquil life. Whether his sovereignty had not been till now acknowledged by the subordinate kings, or whether his success, and the admiration of his conduct, had made it the more feasible to gratify his ambition and his taste for magnificence, does not appear; but as it was of great importance, and circumstances favourable, he now held a great festival for the formal coronation of himself and his queen Gwenhwyfar. The description of the ceremonial, and of the feast given in the Chronicle, is probably taken from the songs of the minstrels, who endeavoured to grace it with all their powers of decoration. Still, however, tradition gave the subject in such a favorable form as to be held a sufficient authority. The institution of the Round Table, to prevent any dissatisfaction among the guests, has been uniformly assigned to Arthur upon this occasion; and the novelty and adroitness of the expedient, could not fail to make a lasting impression on the minds of the guests so relieved from the constraint

of punctilio without any loss of dignity; and prepared to enjoy the festivity with that pleasantry, which the sagacious good nature of their host, and the humorous proposal, tended to promote. To furnish the feast the writer has gone for guests, probably, the whole extent of his geographical knowledge, which is not very accurate. He may, however, have been less extravagant than he appears to be. The descendants of Roman legionaries may have retained the names of their original countries as family distinctions, and a prince of Spain have been, in fact, a chieftain of a clan of such Spanish origin, then resident in Britain.

Soon after this feast Arthur is said to have received a summons from a Roman general then in Gaul to pay a tribute as due to the Roman state, which, if the Roman affairs there wore any thing of a favourable aspect at the time, would not be likely to be omitted by a general of their's, who, it should seem, was pressing Britany. But as no time for such a message could be more unseasonable, or a proposal more irritating

to a high-spirited king, he returned it by a defiance and a menace; which, as far as joining in opposition to the Romans, he appears to have put in execution: and, I am inclined to believe, that he was the person who is called Riothamar (probably a Gaelic designation), and said, by the historian, to have brought troops from Britain to Gaul, to act against the Romans. In this expedition he is said to have gone as far as Langres, and there may be some truth in it. But the history of what passed in Gaul in this age is so obscure, that there is little to be known, and that little seldom satisfactory. Human life seldom gives an advantage without a counterpoise. Whatever may have been Arthur's success abroad, the treachery of his wife, and of his nephew Mordred, to whom he had intrusted the care of his dominions, was preparing to destroy him on his return, which he hastened on receiving the intelligence; and found that his nephew joined with the Saxons were advancing to oppose re-entrance into his kingdom. The battle of Camlan, in Cornwall, soon followed, in which he slew the

traitor Mordred in single combat, hand to hand: but died himself in a few days in the abbey of Glastonbury of the wounds he had received, and was buried there. Thus fell this noble prince, betrayed by those he trusted most; but lamented by his country; and leaving a record in the hearts of his people, which time has not been able to obliterate. Whether it was that his interment was concealed for some political purpose, and that there was a considerable time during which it was hoped he might recover, an idea of his resuscitation to rescue the Welsh was spread abroad, and the influence of such hope was great even down to the time of Henry II. This hope was founded on one of those prophecies which were, no doubt, originally published, like other false prophecies, for temporary purposes; and being once credited, and its accomplishment desirable, was retained in memory, and the hope flattered and indulged from age to age. Yet I imagine that the prediction may at first have had a different reference. The name of our hero was also the sacred name of a mythological personage in the Druidical

mythology, and there is reason to believe, that the British chiefs were accustomed to assume such names either on their initiation, or on the commencement of a great undertaking: and somewhat of this is usual with the Welsh poets still, who, on their being acknowledged as such, though without any formality, assume the names of ancient poets as their own *poetic* names, and prefix or subjoin them as such to their works. Hence it appears probable to me, that the prophecy of the reviviscence of Arthur was originally intended of the reviviscence of Druidism, which its partisans might have no small hopes of, during the troubles which followed the death of Arthur. To their friends the meaning could be no secret, and to the public the more obvious reference was an encouragement to persist in the defence of their country, which they did with an unabated perseverance, till the happy union of Wales with England.

OF FESTIVALS.

SHROVE-TUESDAY.

As the interval from the winter solstice to the vernal equinox was that which in northern climites afforded the greatest leisure to the hunter and the tiller of the earth, it appears to have been the season especially devoted to amusements, such as would engage a neighbourhood, and when towns arose to facilitate intercourse, to have been transferred to them. Hence may have been derived the mirth of the Carnival, of which Shrove-Tuesday now scarcely retains more than the name of a festival. The Carnival itself is a well-known festival of the Romish church, which is a continued one from Twelfth-day to the beginning of Lent. Going in masquerade through the streets and to public places is the favourite amusement. Polydore Virgil considers this festival as the

same with the Roman Bacchanalia; but as the Lupercalia, Quinquatria, Saliorum ludi, and Hilaria, were all celebrated at this season of the year, it may more probably be thought, that the season in general was one of mirth, and the festival of the Romish church a true portrait of the pagan. The same author congratulates England, that the masquerading was never permitted in it, being, by the English law, he says, made a capital crime. He further thus very justly notices the absurdity of the preceding of such a time of licentious revelling to a fast *, "As "at the conclusion of the festival, the an- "nual fast of forty days succeeds, there- "fore throughout our Christian land "great care is taken to feed luxuriously, "in some cases even to gluttony, to gra- "tify, as it were, their subsequent hunger, "though their future abstinence is certain "not to be very temperate. For though "they abstain from bread and flesh-meat, "they will gorge themselves with sweet- "meats and unleavened bread, (pan-

* De Rer. Inv. Lib. 5. Cap. 2.

" cakes), and then boast of their fasting. " Thus they load themselves with sins, lest " at Easter they should have none to con- " fess to the priests, who, on confession, " are to absolve them." It was from this earnest preparation for the fast, that Shrove Tuesday acquired the significant appellation of Guttling, or Guttes-Tuesday, which is not yet wholly obsolete; and pancakes are still sent up on this day at dinner with a persevering punctuality.

The horrid custom of throwing at cocks is, I am happy to say, mostly, and, I believe, wholly, abolished in Wales.

LENT.

There was within my memory a custom of wearing black clothes during this season, observed by some old persons, but, I believe, it is now wholly laid aside.

At this season, the penances performed in some popish countries, and particularly

Spain and Portugal, are in the full extravagance of imagination, such as going about the streets with chains, and barefooted, scourging themselves in the churches, &c. The following curious anecdote, relative to such penances, is taken from the Welsh Chronicle of the princes.

" When Ethelwolf (the father of Alfred " the Great) arrived in Rome, having on " his journey seen persons of many na- " tions, some of whom were naked, and " others in chains, performing penance in " the most populous cities, which had ex- " cited his commiseration; he prevailed " upon the pope to grant, that no one of " his kingdom should, in future, be en- " joined to perform penance naked, or in " chains, either there, or when absent from " his native country."

APRIL-DAY.

The custom of sending persons on inquiries or errands, which are to end in dis-

appointment and ridicule, well known under the terms of making April fools, though it may be, as Polonius would say, *a foolish custom*, is nevertheless interesting as to its history. That it was a general custom of the old Britons is evident, from its being still a general custom in all parts of Britain. It is, or has been so, likewise in France and Germany, as it is called in French, *donner un poisson d'Avril*, that is, *to give one an April fish*, and the Germans call it, *einen in den April schicken*, that is, *to send one on an April errand*. What is still more singular is, that it is also the custom in India, and has been so from time immemorial. The following account of this Indian custom, is given by Colonel Pearce in the Asiatic Researches. Vol. II. Page 334.

" During the Huli, when mirth and " festivity reign among Hindus of every " class, one subject of diversion is to send " people on errands and expeditions, that " are to end in disappointment, and raise " a laugh at the expense of the person " sent. The Huli is always in March,

" and the *last day* is the general holyday.
" I have never yet heard any account of
" the origin of this English custom; but it
" is unquestionably very ancient, and is
" still kept up even in great towns,
" though less in them than in the country:
" with us it is chiefly confined to the
" lower class of people, but in India high
" and low join in it, and the late Surajah
" Dowlah, I am told, was very fond of
" making Huli fools, though he was a
" Mussulman of the highest rank. They
" carry the joke here so far as to send let-
" ters, making appointments in the name
" of persons, who, it is known, must be ab-
" sent from their houses at the time fixed
" upon: and the laugh is always in pro-
" portion to the trouble given."

A custom observed in the same manner, and at the same time of the year, must have been derived from a common origin, and be of so great antiquity as to be accounted for satisfactorily, only by considering it as having begun previous to the dispersion of mankind over the earth.

Mr. Maurice * looks upon it as one of the sports originally introduced to celebrate the festival of the vernal equinox; and as astronomical epochs and periods have certainly been marked, in several instances, by festivals, it is very probable this was originally instituted for such a purpose. But as it is also to be remembered that it was *on the first day of the first month*, that is, at the vernal equinox, that Noah, after the flood, discovered the face of the earth to be dry, it is equally probable, that this circumstance may have given occasion, and certainly a very natural one, to the celebration of an annual festival at this season. If so, the generality of such a custom is accounted for without referring to a scientific motive, and the fact of its having been retained traditionally by nations so widely distant, rather favours this supposition, and if it be admitted as allusions to the circumstances which gave rise to the festival would consequently make parts of the ceremony, that of sending out

* Indian Antiquities, Vol. VI. Page 71. Ed. 8vo.

persons to seek what is not to be found, and return disappointed, seems to have been done originally in reference to the raven which Noah sent out of the ark; for it went *to and fro*, or more properly going from, and returning to, the ark, though not into it, but labouring in vain, till the earth became dry; whereas the dove returned into it. Hence then the raven exhibited folly, and the dove wisdom and affection; and, in a festival of mirth and joy, it was easy, by such an illusion, to sanction some ridicule on selfishness or simplicity. This, indeed, is no more than a conjecture as to the origin of the custom, and it is therefore only offered as the most probable that occured to the writer.

MAY-DAY.

If it were allowed, that the preceding conjecture, as to the origin of the festivity of April-day, is correct, it might be also presumed, that the festivity of this day was in-

stituted in memory of the sacrifice of Noah, on his coming out of the ark on the twenty-seventh day following, and being restored to the light of the sun. And, undoubtedly, such must have been the lively and joyful effect on his mind, and the minds of his family, when, emerging from the ark, the full splendour of the sun burst upon their sight, as to have left an indelible impression of the ecstatic delight of that moment. In the enjoyment of such a renovated existence, nature herself afforded them an emblem in the issuing of the bird from the egg to record their preceding and their actual state; and hence, perhaps, the emblematic mundane egg, probably, the origin of the Paschal egg, formerly presented mutually by friends at Easter. Whosoever considers what must have been their sensations on once more seeing the sun, after a deprivation of his light for twelve months, will not think it extraordinary, that this cause of happiness should hold an eminent, if not the first, place in the narrative of familiar tradition; and that the solar worship should soon have been a consequence, even before the religious precepts

of Noah were so far obliterated amongst the dispersed tribes, as that they should have been reduced to seek, in their own imaginations only, for an idea of the Deity.

If the above conjecture be admitted as to the ceremonies of May-day; those of All-Saints, or All-Hallow Eve, may, in like manner, be referred to the mid-time of the flood; when the patriarch and his family might be considered as at the remotest distance from the light of day, and as representatives of the state of the departed. To this the customs of *diving* for apples, and consulting spirits, the regular ceremonials of the eve, seem to bear so decided an allusion as to go far towards confirming the hypothesis. Neither is this inconsistent with the idea, that these festivals were intended to mark the equinoxes, and were combined with the solar worship. On the contrary, there are strong reasons to induce a belief that this was the fact, and that these seasons were distinguished as epochs of traditional history. The delineation of the celestial sphere is generally

admitted to have been originally made, as we have it, when the vernal colure passed through *a* Arietis, that is, when the vernal equinox was in that which was called the first degree of the constellation Aries. This was so in the year B. C. 1344. It is also evident from the number of signs, that the year was at that time, as indeed it was long before, held to consist of twelve months, and, as the precession of the equinoxes is so nearly one minute of a degree annually, or one degree in sixty years, it may be presumed it was so estimated, and this, probably, was the origin of the cycle * of 60. On this principle, the pre-

* Whether this cycle, which is certainly very ancient, may have not been an antediluvian cycle, I will not venture to pronounce, though I am inclined to think so. Moses, however, seems to have calculated according to a cycle of 100 years in the institution of the Passover. For, according to Dr. Hales's Chronology, the exode, or departure of the Israelites from Egypt, was in the year 1507, or fifteen whole centuries after the deluge, correspondent to which were, as I conceive, the fifteen days of the month Nisan, as noting a precession of fifteen degrees in the vernal equinox at the time of the institution. Some reason for preferring the fifteenth day to the first for the festivals of *both* equinoxes, there must have been, and I know of none more probable than this. It is remarkable, that Hipparchus estimates the precession at one degree in a century.

cession from the epoch of the time of the deluge would have been about 15 degrees, and from that of the creation about 45 from the first of Aries, and correspondent to about so many days after the equinox in the year B. C. 1344, and, consequently, nearly to the first of April and May, the times of these festivals.

Whether then the patriarchial religion were corrupted or not, the patriarchial traditions were probably retained, and there is so evident a reference to it in many of the figures of the constellations on the sphere,* that it is hazarding little to assert, that these traditions are hieroglyphically represented by them, and that it was the original intent so to represent them.

Thus considered, these festivals were of great importance to history, as they were a memorial of those great events. It has, in this attempt to illustrate their origin,

* This has been shewn as to several instances, in an Essay on the Constellations, by the author hereof.

been assumed, that the month called the first in the Mosaic account of the deluge was Nisan, or our March, and there are different * opinions concerning it, whether it was March or September, even amongst the Jewish commentators. But as Moses determines the first month by the Passover, there does not appear any reason for imagining he would have called any other the first in his writings; and as it would have been inconsistent to do it without noting the difference, it is to be presumed he always called it so in the same sense.

EASTER-HOLYDAYS.

Bourne, and after him Brand, have considered playing at hand-ball as an exercise peculiar to this festival, but, I think, on very slight, and even wrong, grounds. It is an exercise which, at least in Wales, is common to every festival, when the

* Rabbi Eliezer says it was Tizri, and Rabbi Joshua says it was Nisan. *R. Solomon Jarchi, on Gen. VIII. Ver.* 15.



I. Havell sculp.

FIVES PLAYING.

ground is dry enough for the ball to rebound from it, if he means the game called in Wales Fives, in which the ball is played against a wall. Another species of this game, called stool-ball, resembling cricket, except that no bats are used, and that a stool is a substitute for the wicket, was, in my memory, also a favourite game on holydays, but is now, like many other rural games, I believe, seldom, if ever, played. These amusements generally began on Easter-eve, and were resumed after Easter-day.

On Easter-day itself, sedulous care was sometimes taken to induce young people to be up early to see the sun *dance*, which, according to the traditional knowledge of antiquated dames, he always does at his rising on that day, in honour of the resurrection of our Lord. The proof of this phænomenon would be worthy of that venerable female philosopher who once exclaimed :—

> Nay, if he says, the world is round,
> Your cousin's sure a clencher :
> For you may see that all the ground
> Is as flat as any trencher.

Should any urchin be hardy enough to doubt the fact, a bason of water was brought out, that (as it would hurt the eyes to look directly at the sun) he might view the reflection of it *from the water*, where the evidence was seldom deficient.

Easter-day itself is kept as the Sunday is generally kept in Wales, that is, with much and becoming respect to the sacredness of the day. It is also marked by somewhat of better cheer, as a festival, of which lamb is considered as a proper, constituent part. In some places, however, after morning-prayer, vestiges of the Sunday sports and pastimes remain.

It is thought (or was thought so) necessary to put on some new portion of dress at Easter, and unlucky to omit doing so, were it but a new pair of gloves or a ribband. This idea is evidently derived from the custom of former times, of baptizing at Easter, when the new dress was, in some degree, symbolical of the new character assumed by baptism.

On Easter Monday and Tuesday a ceremony takes place among the lower orders in North Wales which is scarcely known, I believe, elsewhere. It is called *Lifting*, as it consists in lifting a person in a chair three times from the ground. On Monday the men lift the women, and on Tuesday the women lift the men. The ceremony ceases, however, at twelve o'clock each day. The lifters, as they are called, go in troops, and, with a permitted freedom, seize the person whom they intend to lift; and, having persuaded or obliged him (or her) to sit on the chair, lift, whoever it is, three times with cheering, and then require a small compliment. A little resistance, real or affected, creates no small merriment; much resistance would excite contempt, and perhaps indignation. That this custom owes its origin to the season needs no illustration.

WHITSUNTIDE.

To this festival the only appropriated amusement that I know of, is that of mor-

rice-dancers. It is somewhat singular, that an amusement mentioned by Shakespeare should have not been noticed by Bourne or Brand. According to Shakespeare, it should seem, that the number of persons who represented this dance was nine; and, as the tune to which they dance is, as far as a recollection many years back can trace it, Country Bumpkin, which is danced also by nine, it may be the correct number. The dancers are all men; their dress is ornamented with ribbands, and small bells are attached to the knees. The dance itself is somewhat like that of Country Bumpkin; and, in the course of it, some one of the more active exhibits a kind of somerset, with the aid of two others. They are attended by a Jack and Gill, or, as they are called in Wales, the Fool and Megen. The fool is the same as the clown of the old comedy; the megen, a man dressed in women's clothes, and with the face smutted to represent a hag. Both entertain the mob by ridiculous tricks; and the megen generally solicits contributions from the spectators, and keeps off the crowd by the

dread of blows of her ladle. What is the real origin of this kind of dance, it is very difficult to say. Shakespeare calls the dancing-ground the Morris. If I understand him rightly.

> The nine men's morris is filled up with mud.
>
> *Mids. Night's Dream. Act II.*

In many parts of the country there were formerly patches of ground levelled for dancing, and one of these seems intended here. *Brand*, p. 193.

In the admirable publication of Fragments, by a young lady, the following custom is noticed.

" On Whit-Monday all the country " people must be up at three or four " o'clock in the morning to keep holyday, " on pain of being pulled out of bed, and " put in the stocks by their companions ;" a custom which, I can only conjecture, arose from the early matins formerly, and which, perhaps, began on this day more early than usual, in order that a greater portion of the day might be given to the festivities which were to follow.

WAKES.

These festivals, in commemoration of the dedication of parish-churches, are so fully treated of by Bourne and Brand, that I have little to add to what they have said. In Denbighshire they are generally celebrated about the beginning of September, beginning on the Sunday after the day of the patron-saint of the church of the parish, and ending with the week, according to the computation, though the festivity of late years seldom exceeds the third or fourth day, and is mostly confined to the lower order. The Welsh name for the wakes, viz., GWYLMABSANT, that is, *the festival of the saint*, indicates that this was a Christian festival originally; and that the word *wake*, or *wakes*, signifies the *vigil*, or *watching*, on the eve or night previous to the festival. Of the same kind nearly, is the festival of the *Rush-bearing*, that is, the Sunday, on which fresh rushes were formerly laid on the floors, and in the pews of the churches. This was celebrated

on the Sunday only. But, since the churches have been put in better order, it is, I apprehend, dropped.

ALL-HALLOW EVE.

The usual entertainments on this eve are so happily described by Burns in his Hallow-Een, as to leave very little more to be told. Few, if any, of those he has noticed, were unknown in Wales. Their general object, besides the promotion of mirth, appears to have been to learn the fate of individuals in the following year; and chiefly as to marriage, and life or death, by the omens or apparitions of this oracular night. A circumstance which tends to prove, that the first of November was once, as I have before suggested, reckoned to be the winter solstice, and beginning of the new year. It may well be imagined, that where the curiosity was great, and the mind simple and superstitious, advantage would be taken to turn

both into ridicule. The event of such attempts sometimes has, however, been very serious, from the effects of terror, as it will be imagined, when the nature of some of these modes of inquiring into the decrees of fate is explained. One of these is to go and sow hemp-seed in a churchyard. This is begun a little before twelve at night. The person who sows it goes around the church, repeating these words; "Hemp I sow, let "him (or her) that comes after me mow." As the church clock strikes the last stroke of twelve the sower looks back, and, of course, never fails to see either a coffin, or the future partner in wedlock. This appearance of the partner is said to be frequently that of a person never seen before, but, when afterwards seen, immediately recognised, as in all other trials of the kind. Dangerous hysterics, in consequence of being terrified by the appearances at so lonely an hour, and in a place which may well create imaginary horrors, have been said to have terminated fatally. The same has also been said to have followed the listening at the great door of the church in order to hear the names of those

who were to die the following year, when a person has heard his own name called amongst the first of those mentioned. In both cases the weak were played upon by their neighbours, or by their own imagination. But though they deserve to be so for their folly, which is not very innocent in its purpose, to explore what it does not please the Most High to reveal; it is very unpardonable and wicked in others to risk the fatal consequences of terrifying them. Happily these practices are now almost, if not quite, given over in Wales.

CHRISTMAS.

The substitution of a Christian motive and name, instead of the heathen ones, for festivals at the same time of the year seems to have had but very little effect on the nature of the festivities themselves on those occasions; the sports and customs having continued much the same, though with a different reference, where it could

be introduced. The entertainment was the real object; and this being permitted, the heathens were the more easily induced to change their religion; an indulgence equally improvident and improper in the manner it was granted.

The old customs of this season, amply detailed in Brand's Popular Antiquities, are, for the most part, I believe, common to Wales. The following is undoubtedly of British origin, and not noticed in that book. This is, that on Christmas-eve, a bunch of missletoe is suspended from the ceiling, and that each man bringing a woman under the missletoe, salutes her, and wishes her a merry Christmas and happy new year. "In * France also, the younger "country fellows about new-year's-tide, in "every village, give the wish of good for-"tune at the inhabitants' doors, with this "exclamation, *Au gui l'an neuf;* that is, "*To the missletoe the new year;*" meaning, probably, Hail, or Come, to the missletoe; it is the new year; the beginning of which,

* Note to Polyolbion. Song 9th.

as it has been observed, is very nearly marked by the falling of the berries of that plant. Both of these customs belong evidently to the Druidical system.

Both Bourne and Brand have made large excursions into etymology, in order to discover the origin of the term *jule*, or *yule*, in *yule-block;* and, not seeking it where it was to be found, have had but little success. The word *yule*, is originally the Welsh word *gwyl*, that is, *festival*, the initial *g* in *gwyl*, being changed into *y*, as in *yate*, from *gate*. Hence the *yule-block*, signifies the *festival-block;* as Christmas is in Welsh called *gwylian*, that is, *the festivals* (by pre-eminence); so the block is at present called *bloccyn gwilian*, or the *festival-block*. It is thought essential, that this block should be large enough (beginning at one end) to burn during the twelve days; or at least so managed, by suffering part only to burn every day, as that it may last so long.

Another custom, which is now in many places relinquished, was that of the Plygain,

or service in the church, about three o'clock in the morning on Chrismas-day; when, according to Mr. Pennant, * "most of the "parishioners assembled in church, and "after prayers and a sermon, continued "there singing psalms and hymns with "great devotion till broad day; and if, "through age or infirmity, any were dis-"abled from attending, they never failed "having prayers at home, and carols on "our Saviour's nativity."

The Christmas-carol is still considered as essential to the duties of the day; and a new one is, for the most part, composed every year, by some poet, or rhymer, of the neighbourhood, which is sung in the church after the morning or evening service: and as the carol is looked upon as an effort of genius, one which is approved of seldom fails to raise the reputation of the poet. The subject is of course taken from Scripture, and the carol properly a hymn; and, in some instances, exhibits much poetic

* Tour, Vol. III. P. 161. Ed. 8vo.

genius; particularly in those of Hugh Morris, who, with talents not inferior or dissimilar to those of Bloomfield, had the like merit of employing them to promote religion and virtue.

INTERLUDES.

WHETHER it be from the generality of a disposition to express the words or actions of others in the manner of the original expression, when it has any thing peculiar, that scenic exhibitions derive their origin; or from the particular conversion of a dispositon to mimicry in any individual; they must be of great antiquity, since they are usual in every quarter of the old world; and, if I recollect rightly, were so in Mexico, when first known to the Spaniards. When they were first introduced into Britain, I have found no intimation that could lead to determine; but they most probably were so by the Romans; as the plays represented still retain amongst the Welsh the title of Interlude, and seem to have been originally short plays introduced in the intervals of games, or exhibitions of a more splendid or attractive kind. Horace complains of interruptions of the regular

dramatic performance occasionally for hours,

Dum fugiunt equitum turmæ peditumque catervæ.

and it may well be conceived, that in remote places, the taste for the drama was less refined, and more gratified by show and bustle, than by an entertainment which was a tax on its understanding and attention; though requiring such an amusement through an affectation common to ignorance, of being able to relish what those, who have cultivated minds, really do enjoy. It would, however, be requisite for such an audience, that the play should be short and amusing, with some mixture of farce. Of this kind were the Atellanæ, and, probably, those which were the entertainment of the Roman soldiery in Britain. If any inference in this respect from Welsh history, and the popular accounts of the courts of Uther and Arthur be admissible; it will be, that the Britons were greatly attached to the Roman shows and entertainments. The story of the transformation of Uther Pendragon by Merlin, has so much of this theatric

cast, as to admit of the supposition, that it was taken from some dramatic exhibition; and from the later Welsh Chronicle it appears, that in A. D, 1107, Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, held a great Christmas festival according to the ceremonial of Arthur, where the bards and minstrels had new regulations and privileges, and were handsomely recompensed for the exhibition of their talents; and in A. D. 1135, Gruffudd ap Rhys held a feast at Ystrad Tywi, to which, the annalist says*, "were invited "all whom it should please to come peace- "ably from Gwynedd Powys, Demetia, "Glanmorgan, or Mercia. The feast was "amply furnished with every delicacy, "and adorned by discussions of the learn- "ed, poetic recitation, music, vocal and "instrumental, magical † plays, and all "kinds of exhibitions and manly games." These magical plays seem to have been of the same kind as our Harlequin pantomimes; and though the name of Harle-

* Brut y saeson.

† See Collectanea Camb., Vol. I. Additional Notes, Page 363.

quin may be of Italian, or rather Spanish origin, yet his being a magician is, I think, of British origin; at least, in the Theatre Italien, harlequin is only, in general, an artful servant, who plays witty or humorous tricks subservient to the plot, and Merlin is the magican. Indeed, as far my recollection goes, this kind of theatric exhibition is so particularly connected with the British stage, as to induce me to believe it originated here, and with the Druids, or Druidic minstrels.

With these the Interlude was probably joined. Of this kind of composition, I am sorry to say, I have not been able to find, though I have heard of, a specimen worthy of translation; as the writers of those now in existence, composing for the populace, and being men of little or no education, have, consequently, been able to do no more than imitate vilely the common traditional plan. The plan, however, is such as may be considered ancient. It consists regularly of a dialogue in dimiter catalectic iambics, which is broken into distinct parts by songs corresponding to

the ancient chorus, and adapted to some popular tune. The dialogue is always spoken in a recitative, in which the voice marks the measure, by expressing the long syllables in one tone, and the short syllable in a tone a fourth lower; except the last, which, when the line is catalectic, falls an octave. As this mode seems traditional, it may, perhaps, have been that of the Romans. Two of the characters of these interludes, are constantly a miser and a fool, or jester; the others are mostly taken from some Scripture subject. Much attention to the laws of the drama is not to be expected, or found, in these compositions; but the original cause of the three unities subsist in full force, when they are performed. Having no change of scenery, the scene, for the most part, being a simple curtain, there can be no change of place; and where the place appears the same, the unities of time and place are necessary to agree with the unity of the scene. Whether the stage is indebted to England for the improvement of the change of scene in the same play, or not, I am not certain; because the pegmata seem to have been used for

some such use, but too unwieldy for a ready change. It is, however, a very great improvement; though, by subverting the principle, it subverts the primary dramatic rule of the mighty Stagyrite.

OF WELSH MUSIC.

On this subject there has so much been written, and the laborious researches of Mr. Jones, the result of which has been so fully and well given in his two volumes of Welsh music, that it may seem superfluous to notice it here. But the field of research is seldom so limited, as, even in gleaning, not to afford something worthy of attention. If, therefore, a few things relative to that music, which have not, to my knowledge, been observed by others, be offered to the reader, they may be not wholly unacceptable.

The character of national music has frequently and properly been referred to the national character; and the peculiarities of the music of different nations have been very ably discriminated and explained by Dr. Crotch. There is, however, another relation of the peculiar character of music, which deserves notice; and this is, its rela-

tion to the instruments to which, if any, it is adapted. Instances of this occur continually in the treble part of Corelli's compositions, which I refer to as so generally known. In these, the skips of the notes, from a low one immediately to one above an octave higher or lower, which are more easily performed on the violin, than perhaps on any other instrument, clearly shew, that this was the one to which this part of his music was adapted. In like manner it is observable, that the Welsh music was, in general, originally composed for the harp. For, in tunes of common time (and similarly in others), the bars, or half bars, comprehend generally, and almost universally, distinct sequences of notes, each of which is within the compass of the hand without moving it; and when the passages of a bar consist of several sequences, another sequence generally begins one note higher, or one note lower, than the preceding. Thus the hand moved only at the commencement of each new passage, which gave a facility in the performance; very desirable when the art of fingering was in its infancy; or, more properly

speaking, which naturally arose from the incipient practice of the hand. This peculiarity of Welsh tunes may be observed in The March of the Men of Harlech, Pen Rhaw, Ar hyd y Nos, The Rising of the Lark, and others. These were, therefore, composed for the harp; and are, probably, older than the time of Gruffydd ap Cynan. For if the tune, which goes by the name of his Delight, or Favourite, be of his age, as the name imports it to be; the greater freedom of composition, and some novelty of expression, accord well with the historic assertion, that the Welsh music was improved in his time. Dr. Crotch has observed, that the Welsh martial tunes have great excellence; and he considers these as the peculiarly characteristic tunes of the Ancient Britons. His knowledge and judgment are so much known and esteemed, that his decision will, I presume, be readily admitted. It is hardly a compliment to say, I fully agree with him. There is also another characteristic of Welsh song tunes which depends on the nature of the Welsh language, and in a great measure appropriates them. In this language the

accent, on words of more than one syllable, is always on the penultima, and the last syllable is, therefore, always short. Hence the last bar of a tune generally has, first a long note, then a short one, and the remainder, or the complement of the bar, is omitted; as in the tune of, A noble Race was Shenkin, &c.

It is somewhat singular that, though there is a Welsh tune called the Pipes of Morfydd, there is no one, in any collection I have seen, which can decisively be referred to that instrument, as the one for which it was originally composed; though most of the Scotch tunes may, I think, be so, for this reason:—I suppose the Scotch Pipe, like the Welsh Pibgorn, had but six finger-holes; and, that the interval between the finger-holes were, as in the fife, equal. Hence as song tunes and others frequently begin a fourth below the key note; and, in singing, those who have not been taught to sing, are apt to begin so; the lowest note being D, the key note will be G, and its fourth above, natural; but, by the simple raising of all the fingers,

the fourth above will be sharp; and it must have required considerable time and proficiency, to have found out the means of sounding the natural fourth; and, until this was done, it was necessary to omit it. From * this circumstance, I imagine, the oldest Scotch melodies, which omit the fourth, were originally composed for a

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* In a similar manner the reason why the grave or base tones are said to have been those of the chorda summa, and the acute or treble those of the ima, is easily explained. In playing on the mandoline, lute, or the modern lyre, the instrument is so held, that *the base string* is the highest, and the treble lowest; whereas in playing the harp it is otherwise. The mandoline is played with a quill (as the lyre was with the pecten), and seems to have been the first improvement of the lyre, of any consequence, by the addition of the frets.

The *tibia dextræ et sinistræ* of the Romans have not, that I know of, been hitherto satisfactorily explained; but, as the bag-pipe was known to the Romans, and, in playing this instrument, *the chanter* is held towards the *right* side, and *the drone* thrown over the *left* shoulder, may not these circumstances have given rise to the denominations? If so, *dextræ* and *sinistræ*, will signify *treble* and *base*. Varro calls the dextra, *incentiva;* and the sinistra, *succentiva;* by which, I presume, means, that the right played *the tune*, and the left pipe the *burden*, which agrees with my conjecture.

pipe of such construction; and that the style, being once adopted, has prevailed in others; though I do not pretend to offer this explanation as more than conjectural.

To return to the Welsh music. Of the crwth, or crowd, I have not much to observe. It appears to have been an improvement on the rebec, or three-stringed violin, by the addition of an octave to each of the three strings; so that each of the three original strings, with its octave, might be played together; and, for this purpose, the strings are very ingeniously arranged, it being in the power of the bow to add, or omit, the octaves at pleasure; the octaves to the two first of the original strings being interior, and the third, or base string, with its octave sinking below the finger, so as generally to escape the bow: these being struck with the thumb.

With respect to the harp, Mr. Jones has quoted a very curious passage from Galileo; in which that author asserts, that the harp was brought from Ireland to Italy.

And from a comparison of the scale of tuning the harp, as described by Galileo, with the scales of tuning given in the MS. of old Welsh music published in the Archaiology, both appear to be on a similar system. In each the octave consisted of a double row of strings; one row of which was tuned regularly, according to the diatonic scale; and in the other the tones necessary for accidental flats or sharps, or regular ones where the key note was taken higher or lower than that of the other row, were substituted for the unison. Thus, in Galileo's scale the co-efficient row, if I may so call it, has five semitones correspondent to those usually distinguishable by the short keys on a harpsichord. Of the scales given in the Welsh MS. I cannot speak with any confidence of more than two, viz.,

The first of these making C the key note; but in order to play in G with the major third, gives, in the co-efficient row, F sharp only. The second scale, which is for G, with the minor third, gives B and E flat. According to Galileo, the diatonic and

co-efficient, or chromatic rows, alternated sides in every octave; and the row, which was on the right in one octave, was in the next on the left. In this, as it could not possibly serve useful purpose, he seems to have been mistaken. The probability is, that the compass of the right hand had the co-efficient row on the left, and vice versâ; and that the co-efficient row was played occasionally, exactly as the middle row of strings on the three-stringed harp is at present. This similarity agrees well with what is said by Galileo; and his statement as to the introduction of the the harp into Italy derives great probability from another circumstance.

Strange as it may appear, it is evident, from the words of Giraldus Cambrensis himself, that he knew little or nothing of the music of the harp; and seems never, before he went to Ireland, to have heard this, or any other, than the slow and simple chant sung in unison, and without much variety in the service of the church. However this happened, when he did hear the harp, he was in raptures. In his description

of this music he has laboured so much to communicate his ideas of it, as to make it somewhat difficult to follow it closely in a translation; but, as it is very curious in itself, it is necessary for the present purpose, to attempt such a translation from the original passage in the Topography of Ireland, Book iii. Chap. 11. The instruments of music in use in Ireland were, the harp, and one which Giraldus calls *tympanum*, commonly understood to signify *a drum;* but which I believe to have been the common *dulcimer*, played on with sticks, and admitting two notes to be struck together as a chord; and, therefore, it may be comprised properly, which the drum could not, in the following description:—

"In musical performance this nation "(the Irish) has a superiority over every "other I have seen, beyond comparison. "For the modulation is not slow and "drawling, as in the British, to which I "have been accustomed; but quick and "hurried, and, nevertheless, sweet and "pleasing. It is astonishing, that with

" so rapid a celerity of fingering, the time
" is kept correctly; and that, without any
" failure in the performance, an harmonious
" consonance by thirds, or fifths, can be
" produced and filled up; though the pas-
" sages are twirling, and the instruments
" of a very intricate construction; with so
" delightful a rapidity, so unequal an
" equivalence, and so discordant a con-
" cordance. Yet they always begin *B*
" *molle*, and * return to it, that the whole
" may terminate with agreeable sounds.
" With such delicate skill do they begin
" and end the tunes, and so elegantly does
" the treble run in multiplied notes, whilst
" the notes of the base proceed in graver
" tones, as to increase the pleasure, and
" enliven the enjoyment, so that it seems
" to be a great part of the art to conceal
" the art.

" Hence it is, that accurate observers,

* I once thought, that a variation from the major to the minor key, was intended here; but I rather think it refers to preluding, and to the cadenza still used in some Irish tunes.

" who notice the secret principles of an
" art minutely, derive an inexpressible de-
" light from the very circumstances which
" rather fatigue, than please, the ears of
" those who do not attend to them; and
" may be said, to make no use of eyes or
" ears. To such inattentive hearers the
" music seems a confusion of disorderly
" sounds, and they are soon weary of it."

Such is the description of the Welsh and Irish music given by Giraldus, to which he certainly was not inattentive; though he insinuates, that his fellow-travellers were, and it affords valuable information. It appears, that his friends, who seem neither to have had much curiosity, nor taste, for music, disliked that music, because of the variety of sounds which were heard at the same time, and because of the quickness with which the one succeeded to the other, though the melody and harmony were good. But as they had known no other than the plain chant sung in unison, and in very slow time, they might well be confused by the spirited and combined sounds of the harp, on which the treble

and base appear to have had nearly the same relation to each other as they have at present. Thus far is clear. It has been supposed, that it was the Welsh music, which Giraldus meant in his reference to British instruments; but it was so far the reverse, that in his account of the Welsh music he identifies this with the Irish music, by repeating the very words of his description of the Irish music, as equally applicable to that of Wales. By the British instruments he must, therefore, have meant such British instruments as were not used either in Wales, Scotland, or Ireland. In the time of Giraldus the Irish musicians seem to have taken the lead, which might very well be, as Wales had been long harassed by war, and Ireland tranquil. He also says, that the Welsh now endeavoured to imitate the Irish by a rival instiution, referring, as I should suppose, to the revival of the study of music under new regulations by Gruffydd ap Cynan, which seems to have been neglected during the preceding troubles. It is said, that in this revival some improvements of the musical system were borrowed from

Ireland. What these improvements were, I cannot absolutely determine; but, if I may be allowed to judge from the names of some of the twenty-four variations of a ground as given in the MS. belonging to the Welsh School, they are so, because some of these names are indubitably Irish, and two of the scales of tuning the harp are denominated Irish. I should think, as these variations shew a knowledge of counterpoint, that the improvement was in this respect; and that, as the knowledge of the harp in Italy was derived from Ireland, it may not be going too far to imagine, that a knowledge of counterpoint and singing in harmonized parts, passed over with it. It certainly is very remarkable, that this part of musical science should have been, in any degree, known to the Welsh, Irish, and Scotch, at so early an age, when it was, I believe, unknown to the rest of the inhabitants of Europe; yet the words of Giraldus leave no doubt of the fact, in all these respects. For, though he mentions singing in harmony, only with respect to the Welsh, the same, it may well be concluded, was, in some degree, the practice

of the other two nations. He thus describes it: "Their mode of singing (in "Wales) is not, as it is elsewhere, in "unison, but in different parts of various "modulation; so that, where there is a "number of singers together, which is customary in this nation, there will be "heard as many tunes as there are persons; which tunes, though differing in "notes, form one delicious harmony in "the key of *B molle*, and concur in forming an artificial melody. In the northern "parts also of Britain, and in the vicinity "of York, a similar kind of harmony is in "use, but in two parts only; the base "performing a burden, and the treble "(or upper part) a lively and pleasing "air. This practice is not merely the "effect of scientific skill; but has been "acquired by each of these nations as an "ancient custom, so that its own has "grown into a natural habit, so inveterate, that no simple air in unison, pleases "either the former, who sing in many "parts; or the latter, who sing only in "two. Even the children, when in in-

" fancy they begin to sing, attempt to do " so in the same manner."

This description is so clear and precise, as to need no comment. The practice of singing in parts is, in Wales, so far lost, that scarcely a trace of it remains. I have been informed, that some years ago, a Welsh song, sung by four persons was known; which, by what I could collect from my informer, was a kind of glee; but not having heard it, I can say no more. In singing to the harp, it is still usual for the singer to prefer notes which are chords to the leading notes of the tune to those notes, but in a very inartificial, though not irregular manner.

Nothing can be more social than the Welsh mode, still in use, of singing to the harp. The harper plays some well-known tune, and each of the company, who is able do so, sings a stanza in turn. Those who are accustomed to this method, have generally in memory a considerable number of these stanzas, on various subjects,

and for various tunes. For the most part the sense is complete and distinct in each stanza, and it should properly have an epigrammatic turn. In Mr. Jones' collection of Welsh music, many specimens of them may be seen. Sometimes they are made extemporaneously, and well made; and sometimes the verses of a song are successively sung by the different persons, instead of so many distinct stanzas in the same manner as the Vaudeville, which seems to have originated in a similar custom. The singing of English songs in the same manner might, perhaps, be found as pleasing, as it would be a novel entertainment.

I have been informed, that Mr. Edward Williams, of whose merits Mr. Malkin has spoken largely and justly, has been able to decypher the music of the Welsh School MS.; but, not having seen what he has done, I cannot do more than mention it; with the wish that it were published, as I have no doubt, but that the music is ancient. The most ancient Welsh

tunes, however, are, I believe, well known, which are, Hob y deri and Nos Calan, both Druidical; and Reged, a tune, probably of Cumbrian origin; as the name is taken from Reged, a Cumbrian province.

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES.

When a marriage was to be celebrated, a bidder, that is, one whose charge was to *bid* or invite the guests, was appointed; a person of respectable character, and as well gifted with eloquence and address as could be procured, as on his success the number of the guests chiefly depended. He was also to be sufficiently skilled in pedigrees and anecdotes of families, to be able to introduce compliments derived from these sources occasionally. As ensigns of his office, his bonnet and staff were adorned with wedding garlands; and, thus arrayed, he visited the halls, and other dwellings of the vicinity. This character was formerly undertaken by a chieftain, in favour of his vassal; and his person was respected by hostile clans, as that of an herald. The purport of his bidding was, both to request the attendance of the friends of the young couple, and their benevolent

presents, or contributions, in order to enable the new-married pair to begin their new mode of life with comfort, and the means of prosperity. These contributions were, and yet are, in some article of furniture, outstock, or money; and are regularly repaid by contributions of a similar kind, on like occasion; and, by this most excellent custom, worthy of general adoption in every parish, a provision is made without any great inconvenience to any individual; and yet such collectively sets a deserving young couple at once in a state of comparative wealth and independence.

The duty of the bidder, if well performed, reflected as much honour on himself, as profit in his reward, when hired for the purpose. On entering a hall, or dwelling, which he took care to do when the family was assembled, and guests, if any, with them, and all in good humour; then striking the floor with his staff to demand attention, he, with a graceful bow, began his address. This was sometimes a prescribed form, but more frequently otherwise, and

diversified according to the genius of the speaker, and the character of his auditory, so as to compliment, please, and induce them to comply with his invitation. At present, the invitation is sometimes by hand-bills, of one of which the following is a copy :—

" *Carmarthen, March 20th*, 1802.

" As I intend to enter the matrimonial state, on Easter-Monday, the 19th day of April next, I am encouraged by my friends to make a *Bidding* on the occasion the same day, at my dwelling-house, known by the sign of the Green-Dragon, in Lammas-street; where the favour of your good company is humbly solicited; and whatever donation you will be pleased to confer on me then, will be gratefully received, and cheerfully repaid, whenever demanded on a similar occasion, by

" Your humble Servant,
" DAVID THOMAS.

" ☞ The young man's mother, brother, and sister (*Hannah, Richard*, and *Phœbe Thomas*), desire that all gifts of the above nature due to them, may be returned to the young man on the said day, and will be thankful for any additional favours bestowed on him."

The names of the visitors were registered in a book, that the compliment might be returned whenever it might be proper to do so; and the regular festival of national games and pastimes on these occasions increased the number of visitors.

On the day of the ceremony, the nuptial presents having previously been made, and the marriage privately celebrated at an early hour, the signal to the friends of the bridegroom was given by the piper, who was always present on these occasions, and mounted on a horse trained for the purpose; and the cavalcade, being all mounted, set off full speed, with the piper playing in the midst of them, for the house of the bride. The friends of the bride in the mean time raised various obstructions, to prevent their access to the house of the bride, such as ropes of straw across the road, blocking up the regular one, &c., and the *Gwyntyn*, (literally the *Vane*), corrupted in English into Quintain, consisting of an upright post, on the top of which a spar turned freely. At one end of this spar hung a sand-bag, the other

presented a flat side. The rider in passing struck the flat side, and if not dexterous in passing was overtaken, and perhaps dismounted by the sand-bag, and became a fair object of laughter. The *Gwyntyn* was also guarded by the champions of the other party; who, if it was passed successfully, challenged the adventurers to a trial of skill at one of the twenty-four games; a challenge which could not be declined; and hence to guard the *Gwyntyn* was a service of high adventure. When these difficulties were over, or the bridegroom's friends had anticipated the arrangement, they hasted to the bride's abode; and if the door was shut against them, assailed it, and those within, with music and poetry, particularly the latter, in strains of raillery. If the latter could not be retorted from within, the door was opened; and, by a little management, the bridegroom's friends contrived to draw the bride out of the company, and bear her off as in triumph. Her friends at a convenient time, discovered her flight and pursued, and, if they overtook the other party, a mock encounter took place; in

which the pursuers acknowledged their own inferiority, and the bride was brought safely to the bridegroom's house, and the whole party received with the greatest kindness and welcome. The remainder of the day was passed in festivity. Trials of skill on the national games first took place; and, after these, singing to the harp and dancing, prolonged the entertainment to a late hour.

Such is the account of this ceremony, which I have been permitted to extract from a valuable manuscript of a gentleman well informed on the subject.

This curious ceremony is, I believe, as the semblance of carrying off the bride makes a part of it, confined to some districts of South Wales; that of contributing to the settlement of the newly-wedded pair, by presents of furniture, &c., is also usual in North Wales; and hence it may be inferred, that the custom, partially known, is not of British origin; and I believe it was introduced into this country by the Romans, who certainly had such a



I. Havell sculp.

SINGING TO THE HARP & DANCING.

custom established, as it is said, by Romulus, in memory of the carrying off of the Sabine virgins. Rosini, in his Roman Antiquities, gives a description of the custom on the authority of Apuleius, which exactly resembles the one in South Wales, viz., that when the bride was dressed, a multitude of armed men, flourishing their swords as if raging for battle, burst into her chamber and carried her off, without any resistance on the part of her friends. The pipers were also the musicians. As the Romans were so long in Britain, and the families connected with them, or such as could not return when their legions were withdrawn, may have settled in South Wales, it is no great trespass on probability to conclude, that such was the real origin of this part of the ceremony. Whether the *Gwyntyn*, or Quintain, was in use among the Romans, I am not certain, though I rather think not. The name is, I think, with the learned author of the manuscript above mentioned, decisively of Welsh origin ; and, in the custom of guarding the Quintain, the origin of the stories

in romance, in which a knight guards a shield hung on a tree against all adventures, is clearly perceived.

Another part of the custom, and perhaps more ancient, is still more curious; viz., that when the door is shut against those who come to take away the bride, admission is to be obtained only by the united powers of music and poetry, and it is impossible not to recognise in it an illustration of the well-known story of Orpheus and Eurydice, as a simple fact, no farther varied than, that Pluto is made the representative of a Thracian chieftain, who had carried off the wife of the Bard. It may surprise, that such an illustration can be found in a custom of this country, not yet wholly, I believe, relinquished, yet the comparison of the circumstances leave no doubt that it is applicable, and I have no doubt but, that many more of the supposed fables of antiquity, would admit of as simple an explanation as this of Orpheus, by an attention to popular customs and traditions.

The fable of Apollo and Marsyas will supply another instance. It was the custom of every British chieftain to have his household Bard, and it was the chieftain's ambition, and his honour, that his Bard should be the most eminent of the profession in his power to obtain. But as Bards, however harmonious their strains, might not always live in harmony with their patrons, or their Bardic brethren; the Bard of the household was sometimes obliged to seek a new one, or a rising genius wish to obtain patronage. Where this was the object, the Bard of adventure appearing at the door of the chieftain whose patronage he sought, challenged the household Bard in verse, either to resign a station of which he was unworthy; or, if he hoped to maintain it, to prove his superiority by a fair trial of skill. If the Bard of adventure was able to reduce the other to silence, or an unequal reply; the station was adjudged to him, and the other sent away; and, as the dress of the household Bard was the gift of the chieftain, it was probably stripped off without much ceremony, and conferred on his successor.

The contest between Apollo and Marsyas is of the same kind; and the poetical flaying of the latter, will, in humble prose, be severe enough still, if it signify no more than the stripping him of the robes of his office, and turning him adrift, like the unsuccessful Bard of the Welsh chieftains. It is still but just to add, that, though the Bards were satirical to the utmost in their verses on each other while living, if either died, the other generally wrote a copy of verses to acknowledge his merits, and record his fame. Of this there are a good many instances; and some been reconciled by a copy of such verses, written during the credit of a report that the adversary was dead.

CANWYLL Y CORPH;

OR,

CORPSE-CANDLE.

In many parts of Wales it is frequently asserted, that either previous to, or nearly at, the time of the decease of some persons, a light somewhat like that of a candle, is seen in or near the house, and that it sometimes is observed to go from thence to the churchyard. As this appearance is supposed to be supernatural, it is to some too much an object of terror, and to others too much that of ridicule, to suffer them to pay any particular attention to the cause; which, in all probability, might, however, be discovered to be simple and natural, and of the same kind with that of the Jack-a-lantern, or Will-o'-the-wisp. The latter is known to arise from a peculiar gas, or mixture of gasses,

which proceed from the earth, mostly where coal abounds, and are phosphoretic, and kindled by the atmospheric air or the breath. In the latter case, the Will-o'-the-wisp appears to go on before the person, being sustained by the breath. The corpse-candle appears to be precisely in the same way kindled and directed in its course, and probably arises from the effluvia of a body already in an incipient state of putrescence. It would, therefore, be worthy of philosophic observation, whether it is not always, when it does appear, to be traced to a body in such a state. In cases of cancer, a halo has, in more than one instance, been seen around the head of the patient when at the point of death, which is justly to be attributed to such a cause; and, in like manner, other phenomena peculiar to such a time, may be rationally accounted for; such as the birds of prey flapping their wings against the windows, they being attracted by the effluvia; and the ringing of bells in the house, probably occasioned by the extrication of some electric principle after death, when putrescence commences.

In South Wales another appearance is generally affirmed to take place before the death of some noted person, viz., a coffin and burial train are seen to go from the neighbourhood of the house, in the dead of night, towards the churchyard. Sometimes a hearse and mourning-coaches form the cavalcade, and move in gloomy silence in such a direction; not a footstep is heard, as they proceed along the public roads, and even through the towns, and the terrors of the few who happen to see them are spread over the whole neighbourhood. Of these appearances, the causes are, probably, artificial; and Lear's idea, of *shoeing a troop of horse with felt*, may be, in these instances, more than imaginary. They seem to be a remainder of those means by which the persecuted Druids performed their rites, transacted business, and eluded observation, under covert of superstitious fears excited in all around them. The investigation of the causes do not, therefore, come within the inquiries of the philosopher; they may, probably, with propriety, be referred to

those of the revenue officers, as best able to give a satisfactory explanation and dispel all the apprehensions concerning them.

BURIALS.

When human cares terminate, and human attachments are rent asunder, by the departure of the spirit from its mansion of clay, whatever may have been the previous apprehensions of the event, the affections of the survivors will not, on a sudden, yield to the full conviction of the loss sustained; and the lifeless body retains some share of that affectionate regard which, when animated, it possessed. But its stillness is awful, and whilst the separated spirit may, even by suffering imagination to prevail but feebly, be supposed to hover over its newly-relinquished habitation, a sacred respect to what remains will be felt as a duty, and the solemnity of the moment will be increased by the image it presents, of that which the beholder must at one time present to others.

On such an occasion the customs of different nations have varied much, according to their religious ideas and local situations, but all agree in testifying respect for the dead; the grief of the surviving friends, and sympathy, or a wish to console, on the part of the neighbourhood. In uncultivated and rugged minds, grief is a burden, which they struggle to throw off in violent exclamations, and by frantic gesture; they look to others for assistance, and, in the intermissions of exhausted efforts find a relief in the attempts equally rude of their friend to divert their attention. Not so the gentler feeling. There grief sinks deep into the heart; and brooding every remembrance of the past, multiplies and cherishes its sorrows. With the more common and the rougher nature, the customary mode is to prevent reflection, and divert the attention; and hence it has been usual in some places, for the friendly neighbours to assemble in the house of mourning, and watch or stay up all the night previous to the funeral with the relations. The intent of this

watching has, however, been often abused; and instead of comforting the afflicted, the company have been so desirous of banishing all serious thoughts, as to turn the occasion into one of drinking and amusement; and has, therefore, I presume, been so far dropped as it is in North Wales, and very properly.

"Previous * to a funeral," says Mr. Pennant, "it was customary, when the "corpse was brought out of the house and "laid upon the bier, for the next of kin, "be it widow, mother, sister, or daughter, "(for it must be a female), to give, over "the coffin, a quantity of white loaves, "in a great dish, and sometimes a cheese, "with a piece of money stuck in it, to "certain poor persons. After that, they "presented, in the same manner, a cup "of drink, and required the person to "drink a little of it immediately. When "that was done, they kneeled down; and "the minister, if present, said the Lord's "prayer; after which, they proceeded

* Vol. III. P. 160. Ed. 8vo.

" with the corpse, and, at every cross-way
" between the house and the church, they
" laid down the bier, knelt, and again re-
" peated the Lord's prayer; and did the
" same when they first entered the church-
" yard. It is also customary, in many
" places, to sing psalms on the way; by
" which the stillness of rural life is often
" broken into in a manner finely produc-
" tive of religious reflections. To this
" hour the bier is carried by the next of
" kin, a custom considered as the highest
" respect that filial piety can pay to the
" deceased. Among the Welsh it was
" reckoned fortunate, if it should rain
" while they were carrying him to church,
" that his bier might be wet with the
" dew of heaven."

After that the corpse has been brought into the church, and the lesson has been read, it is the custom, in some parts of North Wales, that a psalm is sung, and the clergyman being at the altar, while the psalm is singing, those who attend the funeral as friends of the deceased, approach the altar in succession, and lay

on a small bracket (which is provided for the purpose) an offering of money, according to the wealth of the offerer, and the respect for the deceased. This offering has been considered, as originally intended to pay for masses for the soul of the deceased; but, I believe, it was originally an offering for the support of the clergyman, as the custom is not, that I have been able to learn, known in England; and the clergy of the ancient British church were supported chiefly by voluntary offerings on the public occasions. In other respects, the funeral is conducted generally as in England; but when the service is over, the friends who have attended it do, in many places, kneel down at the grave, and say the Lord's prayer before they depart from it, and for several succeeding Sundays they repair to the grave, and do the same. In many parts, and especially in South Wales, the friends of the deceased take much and laudable pains to deck the grave with flowers. A bordering of slates or stones, is nicely run around it, and the top bound in by

stones, laid with taste, in a tesselated manner, which has an ornamental effect, whilst it remains a monument of a pious affection, gratified in paying its last tribute to a beloved or revered object.

CONCERNING THE

NATURE, MANNERS, AND DRESS;

THE

BOLDNESS, AGILITY, AND COURAGE, OF THE WELSH.

From Sir RICHARD HOARE's Translation of GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS.

THIS nation is light and active, rather than hardy and strong, and generally bred up to the use of arms. For not only the nobles, but all the people, are trained to war; and when the trumpet sounds the alarm, the husbandman rushes as eagerly from his plough as the courtier from his court. For here it is not found that, as in other places, the labour of the husbandman returns through a regular, annual succession; for, in the months of March and April only, the soil is ploughed for oats; and twice in the summer, and once in the winter, for wheat. Almost all the people live upon the produce of their herds, with

oats, milk, cheese, and butter; eating flesh in a larger proportion than bread. They pay no attention to commerce, shipping, or manufactures; and suffer no interruptions but by martial exercises. They anxiously study the defence of their country, and their liberty. For these they fight; for these they undergo hardships; and for these they willingly sacrifice their lives. They esteem it a disgrace to die in bed; an honour to die in the field of battle. It is remarkable that this people, though unarmed, dares attack an armed foe. The infantry defy the cavalry; and, by their activity and courage, generally prove victorious. They make use of light arms, which do not impede their agility; small breast-plates; bundles of * arrows, and long lances; helmets and shields; and, very rarely, greaves plated with iron. The higher class go to battle mounted on swift and generous steeds, which their country produces; but the

* More probably short *spears*, viz., *darts*; as the bow is not mentioned, and was little if at all used by the South-Wales man, whom Giraldus more especially describes here. Ed.

greater part of the people fight on foot, on account of the nature of the soil, * which is marshy, and not level enough for regular battle. The horsemen, as their situation or occasion requires, act readily as infantry, in attacking or retreating; and they either walk barefooted, or make use of high shoes, roughly constructed with untanned leather. In time of peace, the young men, by penetrating the deep recesses of the woods, and climbing the tops of the mountains, learn, by nightly practice, to endure the fatigue by day; and, as they meditate on war during peace, they acquire the art of fighting by accustoming themselves to the use of the lance, and by inuring themselves to hard exercise.

Not addicted to gluttony or drunkenness, this people are wholly employed in the care of their horses and furniture. Accustomed to fast from morning till evening, and trusting to the care of Providence,

* The translation here, and in a few words more, differs somewhat from that of Sir R. H. Ed.

they dedicate the whole day to business, and, in the evening, partake of a moderate meal; and even if they have none, or only a very scanty one, they patiently wait till the next evening; and, neither deterred by cold nor hunger, they employ the dark and stormy nights, in watching the hostile motions of their enemies.

No one of this nation ever begs: so much does hospitality here rejoice in communication, that it is neither offered to, nor requested by, travellers, who, on entering any house, only deliver up their arms; when water is offered to them. If they suffer their feet to be washed, they are considered as guests for the night. But, if they refuse it, they only wish for morning refreshment, and not lodging. Those who arrive in the morning are entertained till evening by the conversation of young women, and the music of the harp; for each house has its young women, and harps allotted to this purpose. In the evening, when no more guests are expected, the meal is prepared according to the number and dignity of the persons

present, and according to the wealth of the family who entertains. The kitchen does not furnish many dishes, nor high incitements to eating; for which reason they place all the dishes together, * the guests being arranged, not by twos, as in other places, but by threes, on rushes and clean hay. They also make use of a thin and broad cake of bread, baked every day, which, in the † Old Testament is called Lagana, as a trencher for their meat. Though the rest of the family take every care of the guests, the host and hostess continue standing, and paying unremitted attention to every thing, and take no food till all the company is satisfied, that in case of any deficiency it may fall upon themselves. A bed made of rushes, and covered with a coarse kind of cloth, manufactured in the country (called *Brychan)*, is then placed along the side of

* This curious circumstance, was probably a relic of the like custom of the Romans. The passage in the original is very obscure, but the above sense appears to be the one intended. Ed.

† That is *in the Vulgate translation.* For *supponunt*, as the original now has it, the context requires, *superponunt*. Ed.

the room, and they all in the same manner lie down to sleep. Nor is their dress at night different from that by day; for at all seasons they defend themselves from the cold only by a cloak and an under garment. The men and women cut their hair close round to the ears and eyes. The women, after the manner of the Parthians cover their heads with a large white veil folded like a turban.

Both sexes exceed any other nation in attention to their teeth, which they render like ivory, by constantly rubbing them with green hazle and a woollen cloth, and for their better preservation, they absain from hot meats. The men shave all the beard except the whiskers.

They make use of three musical instruments; the harp, the pipe, and the crwth or crowd.

In their musical concerts, they do not sing in unison *like the inhabitants of other countries*, but in many different parts; so that in a company of singers, which one

very frequently meets with in Wales, you will hear as many different parts and voices as there are performers, who at length all close the vocal in unison with the instrumental note in the key of B molle.

They who are the principal persons in a public meeting, or a family, make use of great facetiousness, in order both to entertain their hearers and acquire credit themselves; sometimes by sallies of wit and humour, and sometimes by the severest irony. The people of this nation, from the highest to the lowest, have been endowed by nature with a boldness and frank, open manner of addressing or answering, even in the presence of prince or chieftain, on every occasion; such as we see in the Romans *(Italians)* and Franks, but not in the English, Saxons, or Germans.

There are certain persons in Wales called * Awenyddion, or people inspired;

* Though Giraldus treats this subject very seriously, and with his usual propensity to wondering: and making

when consulted upon any doubtful event, they roar out violently, and become as if possessed of an evil spirit. They deliver the answer in sentences that are trifling, and have little meaning, but elegantly expressed. In the mean time, he who watches what is said, unriddles the answer from some turn of a word. They are then roused from their ecstacy as from a deep sleep, and, by violent shaking, compelled to return to their senses, when they lose all recollection of the replies they have given.

The Welsh esteem noble birth and generous descent above all things; and are, therefore, more desirous of marrying into good, than rich families. Even the common people * retain their genealogy, and

a real miracle out of every imposture, it is evident, that this kind of pretence to inspiration, was a mere trick played on ignorance and superstition. But it was, probably, one derived from the Druids, like many more; and, as it was of the same kind, so it was just as worthy of credit as the Oracle of Delphos. Ed.

* During the last century, this custom has been very unwisely and injuriously neglected, as property is often lost, because of the inability to prove relationship, where it otherwise would be indubitable. Ed.

can not only readily recount the names of their fathers and grandfathers, but even refer back to the sixth or seventh generation beyond them. They neither inhabit towns, villages, nor castles; but lead, as it were, a solitary life, in the woods, on the borders of which their custom is to build houses of wattle, which require no expense, and last sufficiently for a year. They have neither orchards nor gardens, though fond of the fruit of either when offered. The greater part of their land is laid down for pasture, little being cultivated; a small quantity is ornamented with flowers, and less planted. They plough sometimes, though but seldom, with two oxen; in general they do it with four; and the driver walking backward before them, is sometimes exposed to danger from refractory oxen. Instead of using reaping hooks, they do more work, and more expeditiously, by an * iron blade of a moderate

* See the Engraving, which was taken from the under part of the seat in Malvern Church, and seems to represent this instrument. Ed.

size, to either end of which a handle is fixed by a link so as to play freely.

The boats which they employ in fishing, or in crossing rivers, are made of basket-work, not oblong or pointed, but almost round ; or rather triangular, covered both within and without with raw hides, which the fishermen in going to or from the rivers carry on their shoulders.

* SUPERSTITIONS OF THE WELSH.

Extracted from the Itinerary of GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS.

IN the province of Gwarthrenion, and in the church of St. Germanus, there is the staff of St. Curig, covered all over with

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* It is due to the memory of Giraldus to quote the observation of Sir R. Hoare, 'That his own words prove 'Giraldus did not give implicit credit to all the miracles 'which he inserted in his works; for he says,' "I know, "and am well assured, that I have committed to writing "some things which will appear ridiculous, and even im- "possible, to the reader; nor do I wish, that hasty credit "should be given to every thing I have asserted, for *I do* "*not believe them myself.*" Hence it is evident, that Giraldus gave the accounts of miracles, and other strange things, as he received them, without vouching for their truth; and so, without danger to the reader, in times so addicted to superstition, he gave all the information, probably, that he could collect.

The miracles, as they are called, were, in some cases, performed, no doubt, by confederacy; and, in others, by artifices of no common ingenuity, or a superior skill in medicine. The effect of St. Curig's staff, seems to have been such as that of the tractors of later date, produced by

gold and silver, and the head of which extends on either side like a cross. Its virtues, though great in all cases, are especially so for the removal of glandular swellings; insomuch, that all persons afflicted with these complaints, on a devout application to the staff, with the oblation of one penny, are restored to health.

At Elevein, in the church of Glascum, is a portable bell, endowed with great virtues, called Bangu, and said to have belonged to St. David. "This bell, the au-

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drawing a metal frequently over the part affected; and though, in the latter case, the influence of imagination has been proved to be strangely powerful in producing muscular action, and one philosophical fact has been thus ascertained; yet it may still be questioned whether, if the proper means had been pursued, another might not have been discovered; viz., that there may be *particular cases*, and *particular habits*, on which such an application may have permanent effects, by a medium, perhaps, a fluid yet unknown; and, possibly, that by which the sensation of tickling is produced, and which can only be so on any one by the touch of *another*. By the indiscriminate application of new remedies, their proper use has frequently been lost, or not discovered; and it is a problem which yet remains to be solved,—in what cases, and in what degree, the imagination has effect on disease?

" thor of the life of St. Teilo says, was " greater in fame than in size, and in " value than in beauty. It convicts the " perjured, and cures the infirm ; and what " seems still MORE wonderful is, that it DID " sound *every hour without being touched*, " until it was prevented by the sin of men, " who rashly handled it with polluted hands, " and it ceased from so delightful an of- " fice." Collectanea Cambrica, Vol. I. p. 308. The bell at Bangu seems, then, to have been the only remains of the clock of St. David, in the time of Giraldus.

It happened, that the hand of a boy who was endeavouring to take some young pigeons from a nest in the church of St. David's of Llanvaes, adhered to the stone on which he leaned ; and, when the boy, attended by his friends and parents, had, for three successive days and nights, offered up his prayers and supplications before the holy altar of his church, his hand was on the third day liberated. The stone is preserved in the church to this day among the relics, and the marks of the five fingers appear impressed on the

flint. A similar miracle happened at St. Edmundsbury to a poor woman, who often visited the shrine with the design of taking some of the offerings away, which she licked up by kissing. But, in one of these attempts, her tongue and lips * adhered to the altar.

OF FAIRIES.

A short time before our days, a circumstance worthy of note occurred in those parts *(near Neath)*, which Elidurus, a priest, most strenuously affirmed had befallen himself. When a youth of twelve years, in order to avoid the severity of his preceptor, he ran away, and concealed himself under the hollow bank of a river; and, after fasting in that situation for two days, two little men of pigmy stature ap-

* These miracles seem to have been performed by means of a strong transparent gum, or cement, which the monks could dissolve when they thought proper to release their prisoner.

peared to him and said, " If you will go " with us, we will lead you into a country " full of delights and sports." Assenting and rising up, he followed his guides through a path at first *subterraneous and dark*, into a most beautiful country, but *obscure* and not illuminated with the full light of the sun. All the days were *cloudy*, and the nights *extremely dark*. The boy was brought before the king, and introduced to him in the presence of his court, when, having examined him for a long time, he delivered him to his son, who was then a boy. These men were of the smallest stature, but very well proportioned, fair complexioned, and wore long hair. They had horses and greyhounds adapted to their size. They neither ate flesh nor fish, but lived on milk-diet, made up into messes with saffron. As often as they returned from our hemisphere, they reprobated our ambition, infidelities, and inconstancies; and though they had no form of public worship, were, it seems, strict lovers and reverers of truth.

The boy frequently returned to our he-

misphere, sometimes by the way he had gone, sometimes by others; at first in company, and afterwards alone; and made himself known only to his mother, to whom he described what he had seen. Being desired by her to bring her a present of gold, with which that country abounded, he stole, whilst at play with the king's son, a golden ball, with which he used to divert himself, and brought it in haste to his mother, but not unpursued; for, as he entered the house of his father, he stumbled at the threshold, he let the ball fall, and two pigmies seizing it departed, shewing the boy every mark of contempt and derision. Notwithstanding every attempt for the space of a year, he never again could find the track to the subterraneous passage. He had made himself acquainted with their language, which was very conformable to the *Greek* idiom. When they asked for water, they said, *Udor udorum;* when they want salt, they say, *Halgein udorum.*

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRECEDING CURIOUS ACCOUNT.

Strange, or uncouth appearances, veiled in mystery, are so generally resolved into the effects of supernatural powers by the ignorant, and into effects of weak or fanciful imaginations by others, that the former fear, and the latter, will not, in general, take any trouble to investigate the real causes. There is scarcely any superstition more ancient, or which has been more general, than that which respects fairies, or any of which so little that is satisfactory has been written; and yet the above account of them, which is perfectly conformable to the general traditions, leads to interesting historical information. What led me to this idea of it originally, was the specimen of the language of the fairies, as given by Giraldus, which, if not pure *Irish*, is at least a mixture of Irish and Welsh. The letter *U*, with which each of the words begins, is, probably,

no more than the representative of an indistinct sound like the *e mute* of the French, and which those, whose language and manners are vulgar, often prefix to words indifferently. If, then, they be read Dor dorum, and Halgein dorum; Dor and Halgein are nearly Dwr, or, as it is pronounced, *Door* and *Halen*, the Welsh words for *water* and *salt* respectively. *Dorum*, therefore, signifies *the desire of having either;* that is, it is equivalent to *Give me*, and the Irish expression for *Give me*, is *Thorum;* the Welsh, *Dyro imi.* There can then be no doubt, but that, as far as this specimen goes, the language of these fairies was either Irish or Welsh. The order of the words, however, is reversed. The order should be Thorum Dor, and Thorum halen in Irish, and in Welsh *Dyro imi dwr*, and *Dyro imi halen*, but was, perhaps, reversed intentionally by the narrator, to make his tale the more marvellous. Hence it occurred, that, as the Irish had frequently landed hostilely in Wales, it was very possible, that some small bodies of that nation left behind, or unable to return, and, fearing discovery,

had hid themselves in * caverns during the day, and sent their children out at night fantastically dressed, for food and exercise, and thus secured themselves. But, upon further consideration, the fairy customs appeared evidently too systematic, and too general, to be those of an accidental party reduced to distress. They are those of a consistent and regular policy instituted to prevent discovery, and to inspire fear of their power, and an high opinion of their beneficence. Accordingly tradition notes, that to attempt to discover them, was to incur certain destruction. "They are fairies," says Falstaff: "he that looks on them shall die." They were not to be impeded in ingress or egress; a bowl of milk was to be left for them at night on the hearth; and, in return, they left a small present in money when they departed, if the house was kept clean; if not, they inflicted some punishment on the negligent, which, as it was death to look on them, they were obliged

* Certum est reperiri Pygmæos in metallicis cavernis. Cæcilius apud Sheringham, p. 298.

to suffer, and no doubt, but many unlucky tricks were played on such occasions. Their general dress was green, that they might be the better concealed; and, as their children might have betrayed their haunts, they seem to have been suffered to go out only in the night time, and to have been entertained by dances on moonlight nights. These dances, like those round the maypole, have been said to be performed round a tree; and on an elevated spot, mostly a tumulus, beneath which was probably their habitation, or its entrance. The older persons, probably, mixed as much as they dared with the world; and, if they happened to be at any time recognised, the certainty of their vengeance was their safety. If by any chance their society was thinned, they appear to have stolen children, and changed feeble for stronger infants. The stolen children, if beyond infancy, being brought into their subterraneous dwellings, seem to have had a soporific given them, and to have been carried to a distant part of the country; and, being there allowed to go out merely by night, mistook the night

for the day, and probably were not undeceived until it could be done securely. The regularity and generality of this system shews, that there was a body of people existing in the kingdom distinct from its known inhabitants, and either confederated, or obliged to live or meet mysteriously; and their rites, particularly that of dancing round a tree, probably an oak, as Herne's, &c., as well as their character for truth and probity, refer them to a Druidic origin. If this was the case, it is easy to conceive, as indeed history shews, that as the Druids were persecuted by the Romans and Christians, they used these means to preserve themselves and their families, and whilst the country was thinly peopled, and thickly wooded, did so successfully; and, perhaps, to a much later period than is imagined: till the increase of population made it impossible. As the Druidical was one of the most ancient religions, so it must have been one of the first persecuted, and forced to form a regular plan of security, which their dwelling in caves may have suggested, and necessity improved; and hence it may be, that similar

traditions are found in Asia and in Europe, and perhaps, it may not be going too far to suppose, that Christians of the ancient British church, when persecuted, followed the example. To this class of benevolent recluses, the Scotch Browny seems to belong, who was, probably, no more than a solitary individual, and who might, like the Caledonian Merlin, have been insane, but incapable of injury. It is a very remarkable fact, that the tradition of a fairy putting out the eyes of a man who recognised him, which is in a note to the Lady of the Lake, told as a Scottish tradition, is told in Wales with no other difference, than that of the place. Forty years ago, the writer of this was told the tale, and that the scene of the transaction was Wrexham. The probability is, that the tale came into Wales with the Strathclwyd Britons, and that the narrator, as Corporal Trim took the year, took the place nearest in his recollection.

The same idea of the fairies will also explain the account given of * Melerius

* Chap. XII.

by Giraldus; the substance of which is, that Melerius was conversant with demons, and could foretel, with tolerable accuracy, what would happen within the year. This, by a connexion with a secret society, was very possible, as he might so be acquainted with the plan of their operations for the year, and the semblance of insanity, which he declared he had been subject to, precluded suspicion. What Giraldus also relates of one * Simon, who pretended to be of demoniac origin, is of the same kind, and from Chap. XII. it appears, that some of this character were *ventriloquists*, and more than a match for the popish exorcists.

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* Chap. V.

CAN Y TYLWYTH TEG;

OR,

THE FAIRY SONG.

TUNE—Torriad y Dydd, or the *Dawn.*

WRITTEN BY RICHARD LLWYD OF BEAUMARES,
For the Collection of British Music lately published by Mr. THOMPSON,
with Symphonies, by the immortal HAYDN.

I.

FROM grassy blades and ferny shades
My happy comrades hie,
Now day declines—bright Hesper shines,
And night invades the sky.
From noon-day pranks and thymy banks
To Dolydd's dome repair;
For our's the joy that cannot cloy,
And mortals cannot share.

II.

The light-latched door, the well-swept floor,
The hearth * so trim and neat,
The blaze so clear, the water near
The pleasant circling seat.

* In Wales, as in other pastoral districts, the Fairy Tales are not erased from the traditional tablet; and age seldom neglects to inform youth, that if, on retiring to rest, the



I.Havell Sculp.

With proper care your reeds prepare,
Your tuneful labours bring,
And day shall haste to tinge the east
Ere we shall cease to sing.

III.

But first I'll creep where mortals sleep,
And from the blissful dream:
I'll hover near the maiden dear
That keeps this hearth so clean:
I'll shew her when that best of men,
So rich in manly charms,
Her Einion true, in vest of blue,
Shall bless her longing arms.

IV.

Your little sheaves on primrose leaves,
Your acorns, berries spread;
Let kernels sweet increase the treat,
And flow'rs their fragrance shed;
And when 'tis o'er we'll crowd the floor,
In jocund pairs advance,
No voice be mute, and each shrill flute
Shall cheer the mazy dance.

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hearth is made clean, the floor swept, and the pails left full of water, the fairies will come at midnight, continue their revels till daybreak, sing the well-known strain of *Torriad y Dydd*, or the *Dawn*, leave a piece of money upon the hob, and disappear! The suggestions of intellect, and the precautions of prudence, are easily discernible under this fiction: a safety from fire, in the neatness of the hearth; a provision for its extinction, in replenished pails, and a motive to perseverance, in the promised boon.

V.

When morning breaks, and man awakes
From sleep's restoring hours,
The flock, the field, his home we yield
To his more active powers.
While clad in green, unheard, unseen,
On sunny banks we'll play,
And give to man his little span—
His empire of the day.

SUPERSTITIOUS DANCE AT ST. ALMEDHA'S CHURCH, NEAR BRECKNOCK.

From GIRALDUS.

" A solemn festival is annually held " here, in honour of this saint, in the be- " ginning of August. At this festival, you " may see men or girls now in the church- " yard, now in the dance, which is led " round the churchyard with a song, on a " sudden falling to the ground as in a " trance, then jumping up as in a frenzy, " and representing with their hands and " feet, before the people, whatever work " they have unlawfully done on feast " days. You may see one man put " his hands, as it were, to the plough; " and another goad the oxen, relieving " their toil by a rude song: others, imi- " tating the work of the shoemaker, or " tanner; of spinning, or weaving; and, " being brought into the church, and up " to the altar, they all come to them- " selves."

This description is evidently from report. The custom seems to have been, in reality, a festival of the different laborious professions, which, according to the *Brut*, must have been a Druidical custom, as old as the time of King Lear. What is said of the recovery at the altar, is probably a popish invention.

It appears from Chap. XI., that the divination by the blade-bone of mutton, was not a Welsh, but Flemish custom originally, and that it was to be taken from the right shoulder of a ram; which was boiled, and not roasted. * The Scythians practised divination of a somewhat similar kind. In their human sacrifices, they cut off the shoulder and arm of the victim, which they tossed into the air, and drew omens and presages from their manner of falling on the pile.

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* Gibbon, Vol. VI. p. 4. Ed. 8vo.

GIRALDUS, Book II. Chap. I.

The river Alyn, bounding the churchyard of St. David's, flows under a stone called Llechlafar, which serves as a bridge over the river. It is a beautiful piece of marble, polished by the feet of passengers, ten feet in length, six in breadth, and one in thickness. Llechlafar, signifies, in the British language, a talking stone. There was an ancient tradition respecting this stone, that at a time when a corpse was carried over it for interment, it broke forth into speech, and, by the effort, cracked in the middle, which fissure is still visible; and, on account of this barbarous and ancient superstition, the corpses are no longer brought over it. When Henry II., on his return from Ireland, landed in the port of St. David's, and was going in procession to the shrine of St. David's, a Welshwoman threw herself at his feet, and made a complaint against the Bishop of St. David's, and it not being attended to, she, with violent gestulations, exclaimed re-

peatedly, " Avenge us this day, Llech-
" lafar; avenge us and the nation in this
" man;" alluding to an idle prophecy, commonly attributed to Merlin, " That
" a king of England, and conqueror of
" Ireland, should be wounded by a man
" with a red hand, and die upon Llech-
" lafar, on his return through St. David's.

MAEN MORDDWYD, *(THE THIGH-STONE)*, AT LLANIDAN IN ANGLESEA.

GIRALDUS, Book II. Chap. VII.

" There is a stone here resembling a
" human thigh, which possesses this in-
" nate virtue, that to whatever distance it
" be carried, it returns of its own accord,
" the following night, as has often been
" experienced by the inhabitants."

In a note from a MS. of Mr. Rowlands, the author of Mona Antiqua, this stone is said, having long lost its virtue, to have

been stolen within his memory. There was once a tradition also concerning it, that when a wish was made before it, if the wish was to come to pass, the person who expressed the wish could lift it up with ease; but, if not, then it became so heavy, that his utmost strength could not raise it. In the latter case, it required but little art to produce the effect unknown to the simple inquirer.

SNOWDON MOUNTAINS.

GIRALDUS, Chap. IX.

"According to vulgar tradition, these "mountains are frequented by an eagle, "who, perching on a fatal stone every "Thursday, and hoping to satiate her "hunger with the carcasses of the slain, is "said to expect war on that same day, "and to have almost perforated the stone, "by cleaning and sharpening her beak."

It should seem from this passage, that

Thursday was the sacred day of the Druids. In the Gododin, the transactions of a festival week are given; and of Thursday it is only said, *The due rites were performed.* In another poem, The Praise of Lludd the Great, another account of them is given, in which it is said, *On Thursday they were delivered from the detested usurpers:* by which, as the poem relates to the deluge, I suppose, the waters are intended; and that, in consequence of their having some tradition as to this day, it was held sacred; though I can only suppose it.

CUSTOMS
MENTIONED BY MR. LEWIS MORRIS.

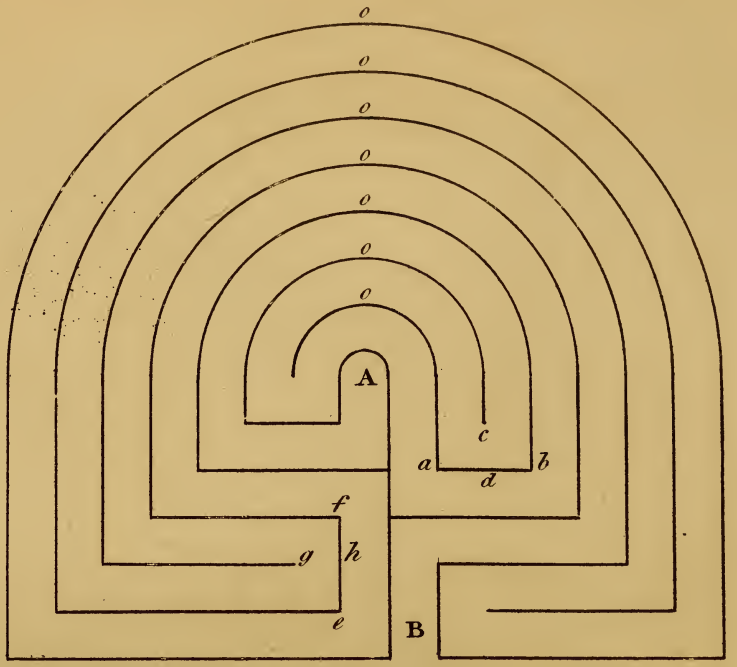
It was the custom among all warlike nations, to give names to their swords; but the ancient Britons took a particular pride in adorning their swords, and making them polished handles of the teeth of sea animals, &c.; and their warlike disposition, and love of the sword, was such, that it was the custom for the mother of every male child, to put the first victuals into the child's mouth on the point of his father's sword; and, with the food, to give her first blessing or wish to him, that he might die no other death than that of the sword. Nay, this nation, by long struggling in defence of their country, had got to such an enthusiastic pitch of warlike madness, that I have read in an ancient British MS. then at Hengwrt, that it was customary when a man grew very old and infirm among them—to desire his children, or next relatives, to pull him out of

bed and kill him, lest the enemy might have the pleasure of that office, or that he should die cowardly and sordidly, and not by the sword.

CITY OF TROY.

See the Drawing.

This is the name given to a delineation of the plan of a labyrinth, which is sometimes cut out in the turf by shepherd boys, whilst they are tending their flocks on the mountains of Wales; and sometimes drawn, and presented as a puzzle by school-boys, to exercise the ingenuity of their school-fellows, either in finding the way to the citadel A, or in drawing the plan. The tradition which accompanies the plan is, that the city of Troy was defended by seven walls represented by the seven exterior lines, and the entrance from B made so intricate for its greater security, as the enemy is supposed to have been under the necessity of going through all the winding interval of the walls before he could arrive



PLAN OF THE CITY OF TROY AS DELINEATED BY THE WELSH SHEPHERDS.

at the citadel. In Welsh, the name given to this plan is *Caer Droea*, or The City of Troy; and the name is a sufficient evidence, that a tradition respecting Troy must have been very popular in Wales, though I suspect, that *Caer Droea* is a corruption of Caer Droeau, the city of turnings, that is, of the Labyrinth; and even so the evidence of the popular tradition, as to Troy, is not lessened, but rather the reverse, because, that in the corruption of words, those which are most familiar are always the substitutes of words whose significations are less so.

In the plan itself, there is considerable ingenuity. As usually drawn, the points *a*, *b*, and *e*, *f*, are usually connected by a line, as in the scheme. This line, however, should be omitted, and the lines *c* and *g*, being extended to *d* and *h*, it would be properly a labyrinth, which, at present, it is not, as there are no means of losing the way into the citadel; the supposed way continuing regularly through all its windings unbroken, which could scarcely have been the design of the inventor.

OF CRUG MAWR.

Crug Mawr, or Pen tychryd Mawr, is a mountain, or lofty hill, in Cardiganshire, situated in the vale of Ayeron, mentioned in Giraldus, where, he says, "there is an open grave, which fits the "length of any man lying in it, short "or long." Hence arose the ancient tradition, that a powerful *cawr*, or *giant*, kept his post on this hill, who was endowed with the genius of the Ayeron vale. He had a lofty palace erected on the hill, and used occasionally to invite the neighbouring giants to a trial of strength on the top of it; at one of these meetings coits were proposed and introduced, and, after great efforts, the inhabitant of the spot won the day, by throwing his coit clear into the Irish shore, which ever after gave him the superiority over all other giants in Caredig land.

What this tale calls the Irish shore, was

probably only *the green sward* at the base of the rock, as the word Iwerddon signifies a *green place.* The grave was, I presume, a probationary or penitentiary cell of the Druids, formed in the interior as a square tube; at the upper end whereof was a stone fitted to the dimensions of the tube and movable in it by a concealed simple machinery, so that when the aspirant or penitent crept into the cell, its depth was adjusted to his size, rather than his size adjusted to it, by the inconvenient method of Procrustes, though both methods may have belonged to the same superstition; and, in flagrant cases, a refusal of the tampion to act have been the signal for the severer process; such refusal being considered as an intimation of the divine displeasure.

WELSH MAEN.

This custom in the barbarous sport of cock-fighting has been fully described by the author of *Popular Antiquities*, but not traced to its origin; though this is indicated by the very name, which should be written as above. *Maen*, and not *Main*, as it is commonly written, signifies *a large stone*, such as the cromlech; and hence it may be inferred, that this singular kind of battle was originally a Druidical ceremony connected with the cromlech, or in imitation of such a ceremony. But as the Druids are known to have sacrificed captives taken in war, the most probable inference is, that the captives were obliged to fight in the same manner, that is, being first divided into two bands of equal numbers, they were to fight till one half of the whole number was killed; the surviving half then being formed into two bands, were compelled to fight till one half of this whole number survived, and so

on till one only remained, whose life perhaps was spared.

This conjecture is founded not only on the derivation of the name, but on the general barbarous practice common to many nations of destroying the prisoners taken in war, and which, until they were able to keep them safely, and provide for their support, by employing them in agriculture or other labour, necessity seems to have introduced. In the Roman state it prevailed as long as it was pagan, and to a much greater degree than it is generally supposed, and it is to Christianity that the world owed the abolition of those Gladiatorial shows, the real political purpose of which was to destroy captives taken in war.

It may, however, have been the fact, that the Welsh Maen was a sacred institution, and that the cock was a sacred bird, as Cæsar says this species of fowl was not eaten by the Britons.

POPULAR TRADITIONS.

Not far from Dolgelleu upon the road to Machynlleth are three large stones called the three *pebbles*. The tradition concerning these is, that the giant Idris, whose residence was on Cadair Idris, finding them troublesome in his shoe as he was walking, threw them down there. In Mr. Theophilus Jones's entertaining and useful History of Brecknockshire, there is this account of a similar circumstance, "Under the corrupted name of *Moll Wal-* "*bee*, we have her castles on every emi- "nence, and her feats are traditionally "narrated in every parish. She built, "(say the gossips) the castle of Hay in "one night; the stones for which she car- "ried in her apron. While she was thus "employed, a small *pebble*, of about nine "feet long, and one thick, dropped into "her shoe: this she did not at first re- "gard; but, in a short time, finding it

" troublesome, threw it over the Wye into
" Llowes churchyard, in Radnorshire
" (about three miles off), where it remains
" to this day, precisely in the position it
" fell; a stubborn memorial of the *histori-*
" *cal fact*, to the utter confusion of all
" sceptics and unbelievers."

This Moll Walbee is, by the gossips of Brecknockshire, supposed to have been the same as Maud of St. Waverley, or Maud de Haia, who built Hay-castle, and, as Maud was detested by the Welsh, they may have given her the title of a fury; but the part of the tradition relative to the pebble, and building castles, must be of much higher antiquity, as in many places of North Wales, where there are heaps of rude stones, a witch is said to have carried them thither in her apron; and, as these stones generally have formed parts of enclosures, the original name was, perhaps, *Malaen y Walfa*, or *The Fury of the Enclosure*, as the ignorant frequently attribute structures, which have any thing formidable and astonishing in their appearance, to the work of evil spirits.

ROLLDRITCH.

The popular traditions as to monuments of very remote antiquity, are frequently amusing, and even the apparent absurdity becomes occasionally a key to the truth. As in the preceding instance, a fury, or witch, had the credit of displaying her wonderful powers, so also, at Rolldritch, upon inquiry, I found the popular tradition to be, that a witch, in revenge for some offence, had turned the offenders into the stones which form the circle there. Rhwyldrech would signify, the *Circle of Superiority*, or *Victory*, and hence, if captives were sacrificed to Malaen, when they were brought into the circle, the stones might be considered as forming the fatal circle of her power; and as they were the monuments of destruction, the idea of the transformation of the captives might arise from some ambiguous expression.

Another tradition relative to the circle

at Rolldritch is, that the number of stones in the circle cannot be reckoned truly, for that in reckoning them a second time, the number will be found different from that of the first; a tradition which intimates, that the place was once used for rites of an awful superstition which confounded the senses.

CADAIR IDRIS.

Idris, or Edris, is recorded in the Triads, as one of the three great astronomers of antiquity, and, as of remote times, and conspicuous celebrity, is dignified by the name of *Cawr*, that is, *the Hero*, or, as applied to him, more properly *the Renowned*. Whether it were, that elevated mountains, as affording an extensive horizon, and a station of apparent proximity to the heavens, induced the multitude to imagine they must be the best adapted to astronomical pursuits to transfer the names of celebrated astronomers to the

mountains may be questionable. A more probable reason is, that, as in order to discover the first appearance of the new moon, which was a point of great importance to the due celebration of festivals as well as to the formation of a calendar, that appearance was looked for from the highest elevations, such were on these occasions resorted to by the astronomers. And, for this purpose, Cadair Idris is most admirably appropriate. The commanding view, and magnificent extent of horizon, which the summit, easily attainable, affords, would be equally advantageous and interesting. On this summit a roundish enclosure of stone walling marks what is called, the *Cadair*, or *Chair*, to which tradition assigns a power of affecting the imagination at night, far beyond what all the romantic and sublime scenery which the day illumines, can aspire to. He who sleeps upon this summit for one night, will, it is said, be endowed with a poetic genius; and the late Rev. Evan Evans, author of the Dissertatio de Bardis, did, as I have been assured by one who was well acquainted with him, once try the experiment. But

poor Evans did not want genius. Could he have been endowed with a more patient sufferance and a calmer mind, the gift would have been a blessing. The experiment itself was one of those symptomatic whims, which like the flickering of an expiring flame, mark the morbid state, and sometimes presage the total loss of the powers of the understanding. The latter he happily escaped, but to the former, I believe, he was, in no small degree subject, for many of the last years of his life. His genius soon gave him reputation, and, as it is but too common, his hopes were at first two much raised, and, not being aware, perhaps, that estimation, and the encouragement he looked to are seldom closely allied, though the latter may follow in time; his disappointment, which should have urged him to prudent industry, preyed upon his mind till he fell into negligence of himself; though his favourite pursuits of poetry and Welsh researches were continued till he died with an ardour deserving of a better fate.

When the astronomer Idris was cele-

brated as an ancient *cawr*, the term in its popular signification being *a giant*, the tales of the neighbourhood did not fail to amplify his size to the proper imaginary dimensions, or to give an idea of it, not, indeed, as the Greeks, by an *ex pede Herculem*, but by the *three pebbles*, which, being rather troublesome in his shoe as he was walking, he threw out of it nearly to the place where they now lie, on the road to Machynlleth. Very troublesome they are not to be supposed to have been to the giant, as they would only weigh a few tons. They are, however, large enough for a nursery computation of the giant's stature

OF WEARING THE LEEK.

HAD the custom of wearing any thing taken from the vegetable kingdom as a mark of national distinction at a particular season been of any great antiquity in Britain, it scarcely admits of a doubt, but that the missletoe would have been chosen for that purpose by the Britons, and that the day of wearing it would have been one of the Druid festivals, such as the first of May. Yet though the wearing of the leek is not to be referred to a Druidical origin, it is derived from an origin more honourable than superstition could give it; from one of those victories which have so often graced the arms of this country when at war with France. The engagement was one in which the Welsh bore a distinguished part; and as Shakespeare has put the circumstances into the mouth of his admirably-drawn character of Fluellin in Henry V., they cannot be made more in-

teresting than they will be in the spirited, and, at the same time, modest and diverting statement he has given of them.

" *Flu.* Your grandfather of famous me-
" mory, an't please your majesty, and
" your great uncle, Edward the plack
" Prince of Wales, as I have read in the
" chronicles, fought a most prave pattle
" here in France.

" *K. Henry.* They did Fluellin.

" *Flu.* Your majesty says very true. If
" your majesty is remembered of it, the
" Welshmen did goot service *in a garden*
" where *leeks did grow, wearing leeks in*
" *their Monmouth caps*, which, your ma-
" jesty knows, to this hour is an honour-
" able padge of the service; and, I do be-
" lieve, your majesty takes no scorn to
" wear the leek upon St. Tavy's day.

" *K. Henry.* I wear it for a memorable
" honour.

This must have been, I suppose, the glorious battle of Poictiers. John of Gaunt (then Earl of Richmond) was, at the time, about 17 years old; and, as this is the only

battle answering the description at which both could have been present, I conclude, it is the one intended in the above quotation. The Welsh archers had also signalized themselves at the battle of Cressy, so that the leek may be deemed a memorial, and the only one still worn, of two of the most glorious victories that ever graced the British arms, as well as of the part which the Welsh had the honour of bearing in the success.

I have been informed, that some years ago a song, commemorating the occasion of wearing the leek, was known and sung in South Wales. Of this song I was promised a copy if my informant could, as he thought it was in his power, obtain it. Having heard no more of it, I can only add, that, according to his representation of it, the substance of the song was the same as that of the speech of Fluellin.

SORTES BIBLICÆ.

The mode of inquiring into futurity by opening a book, and taking the first sentence that meets the eye as the answer, is so well known as to require no particular explanation, and that the Bible should especially have been used for this purpose, was a ready consequence of prevailing superstition, and an application to be expected from those who, not being able to abolish a pagan practice entirely, by a mistaken, though possibly well-meant, change of the mode, endeavoured to connect the practice with Christianity.

There is little doubt but that the Druids made use of some kind of lots made of wood, for such inquiries, and particularly of the branches of the missletoe, which, from their form, may easily be made to represent all the characters of the most ancient Welsh alphabet; and the very name of this alpha-

bet leads to this conclusion. It is called Coelbren y Beirdd, that is, The Wood of Credence of the Bards, and which, therefore, marks it as that by which they pretended to give some information by divining; since the word which I have translated *credence*, properly signifies the kind of credit given to divination, omens, &c. The method in which the investigation was made cannot, perhaps, now be accurately determined, but if, as it seems probable, a similar method was made use of by the Christians in later times, the method seems to have been to assign a particular meaning to every letter, and having shaken all the characters together, and desired the inquirer to draw one as in a lottery, to predict according to the meaning assigned to the character drawn. Such nearly is that described in the following mode of Sortes Biblicæ, which is taken from a Welsh manuscript of the 15th century, and which I have frequently referred to as the White Book of Hergest, in the Wynnstay Collection. From the preparatory ceremonial it will appear, that the practice belonged to those who were of the church of Rome.

The purport of the passage referred to is as follows:—

The inquirer shall say three Paters, three Aves, the first Psalm, and Gloria Patri; then opening the Bible shall note the first letter of the page opened, which is to be interpreted by the following rule:—

A signifies a good and happy life; B, Peace of the nations; C, Death of the Querist; D, Great joy; E, Revenge, &c.

Thus much is sufficient to shew the method, which is all that is necessary. To give the whole might only serve to renew the superstition. I will only add, that dreams were interpreted by the same method.

CURIOUS NUMERATION.

In the Book of Basingwerke, and at the end of the British Chronicle, on a spare part of the page, I found the following curious system of Numeration. Of its use I must confess I am ignorant, as I have not met with any instance of its application. The numbers do not form any regular series, neither does the system seem applicable to any purpose of calculation. The only probable conjecture I can form respecting it is, that it was a numerical cipher used for secret writing. The book from which it is taken, was written about the middle of the 15th century, when the Arabic numerals were well known. To the supposition that the use was for cipher, the repetition of the same numbers may be objected, particularly that of 500 for A, D, and Q; but as the true reference was easily to be determined by a point over either of the three characters, the ob-

jection may not be material. The original passage seems to be an extract, or a note of the writers, and is the more remarkable, as the dates and other numbers given in the manuscript, are all given in the common Roman numerals. In the following arrangement, the first column follows the manuscript; the second I have annexed to it, in order to shew what letters correspond to the numerals, as these succeed each other in this strange kind of numeration, which, however, may be more explicable to others than it is to me. The writer briefly says, "Now we will shew "what is the numerical value of each "letter," and proceeds to state it thus:—

Viz.	A is 500	1	I
	B 300	5	V
	C 100	9	S
	D 500	10	X
	E 250	15	O
	F 40	40	F
	G 400	50	L
	H 200	80	R
	I 1	90	N
	K 140	100	C
	L 50	140	K
	M 1000	150	Y
	N 90	160	T

O	15	200	H
P	300	250	E
Q	500	300	B, P
R	80	400	G
S	9	500	A, D, Q
T	160	1000	M
V	5	2000	Z
X	10		
Y	150		
Z	2000		

It may be necessary to observe that there is only one of these letters which is in Welsh the initial of the number to which it is annexed, that is the C, the initial of cant., or one hundred.

It is also a curious peculiarity, that though the Welsh reckon regularly as far ten, they proceed by one and ten, two and ten, &c., to fifteen, and then go on by one and fifteen, two and fifteen, &c., to twenty, and reckon thus by twenties, and not by tens, till they come to a hundred. This mode is not, I believe, used by any other European nation, certainly not by any whose numeration I have been able to see, most of which I have examined.

HOLY WELLS.

The superstitious ceremonies used at such wells, and the respect with which they are frequented, must be of very remote antiquity, since as early as the time of Joshua the name of En-shemesh, or the Fountain of the Sun, was given to a well which manifestly indicates that the well was dedicated to the sun, and the name of another En-rogel, or the Fountain of Secret Inquiry, or of Calumniation, as it may be translated, intimates, that it was used for some purpose of divination. To these may be added En-dor, or the Fountain of Circular Revolution; and in these three names the three principal superstitions are discernible, which are denoted by practices not even at this time wholly fallen into disuse. Some doubts may perhaps be suggested as to the translation I have given of En-rogel, because the Jewish commentators have referred the word

Rogel to some action of the feet in fulling of cloths, and supposed the well to have been appropriated to that use. This exposition, however, is at best but conjectural. The radical word signifies, *a foot*, and hence the verb Ragal signifies to trace the footstep, and particularly that of an enemy, and, metaphorically, to mark the conduct of another invidiously, and with the intent of destroying him; and hence it appears to me, the interpretation I have given is justifiable, at least. But this well was situated also in the same district as En-shemesh, referred to before; and as Debir, or The Oracle, was in that district (Joshua xv. ver. 7), and the stone of Zoheleth, or the Stone of *Crawling*, is said to have been near En-rogel (1 Kings i. ver. 9), literally close by it, all these circumstances shew, that the district was one of great superstition, and I therefore conceive, that the sense I have attributed to En-rogel is the true one. The origin of these superstitions must undoubtedly be looked for in a hot climate, where a well of pure water affords one of the greatest blessings of life; and thus the Hebrew word for a

tank, which is of less value than a well, with the slight variation of a vowel point, signifies a blessing; and when the sun became an object of worship, the dedication of a well to it, as of the earthly to the heavenly source of comfort, was simple and natural. From this reference a higher estimation of a well opening and flowing eastward may have arisen, and, as I have heard, such wells were formerly thought in Wales to afford the purest water. The purifications necessary, first for health, and secondly preparative to religious ceremonies, were additional motives for a regard to wells; but above all, where the waters were found to possess medical virtues, those virtues were readily believed to be conferred by some benevolent and superintendent divinity. Whatever be the religious system, deprecation of the wrath of the Deity must form one part of it, and humiliation must precede an act of supposed purification. It is the course which nature and reason, even in its most feeble efforts, would dictate. Accordingly it appears, that in Ireland the votaries of some holy wells *crawl around*

them several times on their hands and knees, and such, I presume, was the custom at En-dor in the time of Joshua. The expression of gratitude for benefits received was another natural sentiment of religion; and hence, probably, arose the custom of leaving some token of it, however small, such as the dropping of a pin into the well, or hanging up a rag on some bush near it. Brand says, "I have frequently "observed shreds, or bits of rags, upon "the bushes that overhang a well in the "road to Benton, a village in the neigh-"bourhood of Newcastle. It is called, "The Rag-well. The spring has been "visited for some disorder or other, and "these rag-offerings are relics of the then-"prevailing superstition. Thus, Mr. Pen-"nant tells us, they visit the well of Spey "in Scotland, for many distempers, and "the well of Drachaldy for as many more, "offering small bits of money, and bits of "rags."

In the third of the excellent letters of Columbanus, a very interesting account is given of the well-worship as practised in

Ireland, a worship justly censured by the worthy author. In this account he says, "When I pressed a very old man, Owen "Hester, to state what possible advantage "he expected to derive from the singular "custom of frequenting in particular such "wells as were contiguous to *an old blasted* "oak, or an upright unhewn stone; and "what the meaning was of the yet more "singular custom of sticking *rags* on the "branches of such trees, and *spitting on* "*them*, his answer, and the answer of the "oldest men, was, that their ancestors al- "ways did it; that it was a preservative "against Geasa Draoidecht, *i. e.*, the sor- "ceries of the Druids;—and so thoroughly "persuaded were they of the sanctity of "these pagan practices, that they would "travel bareheaded and barefooted from 10 "to 20 miles, for the purpose of *crawling on* "*their knees* round *these wells*, and *upright* "*stones*, and *oak* trees, *westward*, as the "sun travels, some three times, some six, "some nine, and so on—until their volun- "tary penances were completely fulfilled. "A passage from Hanway leads directly "to the Oriental custom of these Druidical

" superstitions. ' We arrived at a de-
" ' solate caravanserai, where we found
" ' nothing but water. I observed *a tree*
" ' *with a number of rags* to the branches.
" ' These were so many charms, which
" ' passengers coming from Ghilaw, a
" ' province remarkable for *agues*, had left
" ' there, in a fond expectation of leaving
" ' their disease also in the same spot.'
" From Chaldea and Persia well-worship
" passed into Arabia, where the well of
" Zimzim at Mecca was celebrated from
" the remotest ages," &c.

In these passages there is such a conformity with the stone of crawling, near En-rogel, as leaves no doubt on my mind, but that the superstitious practice in Ireland is derived from that of the Canaanites. The name of Endor properly signifies, *The Well of Revolution*, and points to some kind of *going round*, as the ceremony used at that place, but whether this was going round the well, dancing in a circle, or turning round in the same manner as the Turkish dervishes are still known to do as a religious ceremony, is a question on which so

much might be said, and so little determined, that it may be most prudent not to enter upon it. That Endor was a place devoted to a pagan superstition, seems to have been the reason why the sorceress, or witch, consulted by Saul, should have made it that of her abode, and found her safety in it, being, as it was, in the hilly region of Mount Tabor. In such countries, when communication with others is rare, and especially if it be by means of another language than the common one of the lower orders, a superstition which has once established itself, can scarcely be eradicated. Impressed on the minds of the young as the wisdom, the piety, or the apprehension of preceding generations, the sentiment

"Grows with their growth and strengthens with their strength."

The practices annexed to it proceed as of common observance amongst themselves, and little noticed by strangers; from whom they are generally concealed, and to whose reproof or ridicule, when they are not so, the answer, if any, might be such, as an indiscreet attack upon pre-

judices generally receives, and perhaps deservedly. The very ancient wells which have been already mentioned, as denoted by their names to have been frequented for their supposed sanctity, mark, if not the precise places where the superstition first arose, places where it was adhered to, as far back as the days of Joshua, and it may be presumed, that in his time it was common to Chaldea and Syria, and that, with the first colonies after the dispersion from Babel it was carried westward; and though it is well known to have once prevailed widely in the intervening countries of Europe; the only traces of it, I believe, remain now in Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, the Western parts of Europe; and however their existence, as inconsistent with pure religion, may be lamented, as evidence of the truth of the Mosaic history they are valuable, and not less so as evidences of the traditional reference of these nations to their Oriental origin. I have enlarged somewhat on this subject, as no one else, that I know of, has considered these wells of Canaan in

the same light; I now come to those of Wales of the same kind.

There are in North Wales, several wells which have been celebrated for the superstitious rites attached to them, and as affording remarkable instances of the effects of imagination on the physical state of the human frame; St. Thecla's at Llandegla, St. Ælian's at Llanelian, St. Dwynwen's in Anglesey, and St. Wenefrede's at Holywell in Flintshire.

The well of St. Thecla must have once enjoyed a high degree of celebrity for cures of epilepsy, as the disorder itself is known still by the name of *Clwyf Tegla*, that is, Thecla's, or Tegla's disorder, as supposed to be cured by her influence. This well is at Llandegla in Denbighshire; nearly half way between Wrexham and Ruthin. The ceremony used there was as follows:—

"Patients in epilepsy washed in the "well, and having made an offering of a "few pence, walked thrice around the

" well; and thrice repeated the Lord's " prayer. The ceremony never began till " after sunset. If the patient was a male, " he offered also a cock; if female, she " offered a hen. This fowl was carried in " a basket, first round the well, and then " into the churchyard, where the ceremony " was repeated" *(probably of going around it thrice, saying the Lord's prayer each time)*. " The patient then entered into " the church, and got under the commu- " nion-table, where, putting a Bible under " his head, and being covered with a car- " pet or cloth, he rested till break of day; " and then, having made an offering of " sixpence, and leaving the fowl in the " church, he departed. If the fowl died, " the disorder was supposed to be trans- " ferred to it, and the cure to be effected."

This account was given of the ceremony about a hundred years ago; and is, as I have lately been informed, not yet wholly abolished. That its origin is more ancient than the commencement of Christianity, the offering of a cock, or hen, strongly indicated, as these birds were held sacred,

and accordingly offered in sacrifice. In an old Welsh account of saints'-days, I find the following notice annexed to the name of Cynddilig, a Welsh saint. "This saint's "day is kept in the parish of Rhystud, "where, from mid-day to mid-night on the "eve of the winter kalends (first of No-"vember), the offering of a cock, as a pre-"servative against the hooping-cough is "permitted." This kind of offering seems to have been made in various cases of disease; and some years ago in digging up the under part of the floor of an old church in the south of England, a considerable quantity of the bones of fowls were turned up. The advantages to be derived from such a superstition were easily perceived by the monks of the Romish church; and the use of the Bible, and Lord's prayer, was exactly in their style of appropriating heathen superstitions. The name of St. Thecla is also, most probably, an adaptation of the same kind. The origin of the name for the epilepsy, *Tegla*, is properly, *Teg-glwyf*, or *the happy disorder*, since it is even now sometimes called *Clefyd bendigaid*, that is, *the blessed*

disorder, in the same manner as St. Anthony's fire was called *ignis sacer*, &c. The change of *Teg-glwyf* into *Tegla*, is a very simple one, and the name of Thecla, was as commodious a succedaneum for Tegla, as the warmest wishes of a legend writer could possibly desire; and the probability, that such was the real origin of this name, will be increased by a similar one in the two following instances :—

If the well of St. Thecla, as it is called, has been noted for producing a salubrious effect, by a superstitious influence on the imagination, that of St. Ælian, not far from Bettws Abergeley in Denbighshire, is, or was till very lately, perniciously resorted to, and made use of, to produce an influence of an opposite nature upon the imagination; and the consequences have frequently been known to be *the death* of the credulous victim. It is not merely an opinion, but a firmly-rooted belief among the peasantry of this and the neighbouring counties, that if any one be, as the common phrase for the ceremony is, *put into this well*, by which

is to be understood, the being made subject to its influence, that person will pine away till the cause is removed. Hence, if one of the lower order of the peasantry conceived a malignant resentment against another, this became a mode not less certain, in many instances, than horrible, of gratifying the desire of vengeance. Near the well resided some worthless and infamous wretch, who officiated as priestess. To her the person who wished to inflict the curse resorted, and for a trifling sum, she registered in a book, kept for the purpose, the name of the person on whom it was wished it should fall. A pin was then dropped into the well in the name of the victim, and the report, that such a one had been put into the well, soon reached the ears of the object of revenge. If this object were a person of a credulous disposition, the idea soon preyed upon the spirits, and, at length, terminated fatally; unless a timely reconciliation should take place between the parties, in which case the priestess, for a fee, erased the name from her book, and *took the poor wretch out of the well;* that

is, retracted the curse. Where death has been the consequence, and, that it has been so in many instances, is asserted so as to leave little or no doubt of the fact, is it less murder in the priestess and the applicant, than if it were perpetrated by any other means? Most certainly not. I have lately heard that the well has been filled up. I hope it is so. For if they who can, do not prevent such a practice, they would do well to consider whether the omission of doing so, does not involve them also in some participation of the crime of murder.

The ceremony of dropping pins into the well is common to other * wells in the country; but as to the others, whatever idea may originally have been attached to the ceremony, it seems to be wholly forgotten; but it appears to have been, at first, a kind of offering to the genius of the well of some part of the dress, and the pin a substitute.

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* It was a custom at Gresford, and also at a well in Barri Island.

That a well should be dedicated even to a popish saint, as a well of cursing, or as a means of satiating a diabolical spirit of revenge; even with every allowance for the uncharitable spirit of popery, is not credible; as it would be an encouragement to a spirit of revenge amongst its own adherents. The superstition must, therefore, be considered as Druidical; and, it is most probable, that this well was originally dedicated to *Malaen*, the genius of destruction, who is represented as a fury; that it was called at first, *Ffynnon Malaen;* and that the monks, finding it difficult to eradicate the custom, and wishing to suppress a Druidic appellation, substituted that of *Ælian* for *Malaen*. Such a new dedication, and building a church near the well, were certainly the best modes of opposing the error; and they did, perhaps, all in their power to oppose it. Yet were not they, nor has the resumption of rational and pure Christianity as the religion of the country, been able to suppress it entirely.

The following is the account of the Well of St. Dwynwen, as given by that able antiquarian Mr. Lewis Morris.

THERE was, in Dafydd ap Gwilim's "time," about the middle of the fourteenth century, "a vast concourse from all "parts of Wales to the monastery of St. "Dwynwen in Anglesey, now called "Llanddwyn, in ruins. Here were con-"stant wax lights kept at the tomb of this "virgin saint, where *all persons in* LOVE "applied for remedy, and which brought "vast profit to the monks; and Dwyn-"wen was as famous among the Britons "in affairs of love, as Venus ever was "among the Greeks and Romans. But "David ap Gwilim's ludicrous manner "of applying to this saint for relief, "and his publishing it in a poem (which "is in every body's hands), shews how "slightly the poet made of these religious "cheats. Dear Dwynwen (says he), I, by "your virginity, I beg of you, and by the "soul of your great father Brychan, send "this girl to meet me in the grove. You

" are in heaven, God will not be angry
" with you, nor turn you out; for he will
" not undo what he has done," &c.

As it will tend to elucidate the subject, I subjoin an account of St. Maddern's Well in the parish of Penzance, Cornwall. From Camden. Ed. Gibson, p. 21, 22.

" Bishop Hall tells us (Mystery of
" Godliness), that a cripple, who for
" sixteen years together was forced to
" walk upon his hands, by reason of the
" sinews of his legs being contracted, was
" induced, by a dream, to wash in this
" well; which had so good effect, that
" himself saw him both able to walk, and
" to get his own maintenance. Two per-
" sons that had found the prescriptions of
" physicians altogether unprofitable, went
" to this well (according to the ancient
" custom), on Corpus Christi eve, and lay-
" ing a small offering on the altar, drank
" of the water, and lay upon the ground all
" night, in the morning took a good

" draught more, and each of them carried
" away some of the water in a bottle.
" Within three weeks they found the ef-
" fect of it; and (their strength increasing
" by degrees) were able to move them-
" selves upon crutches. Next year they
" took the same course, after which they
" were able to go up and down by
" the help of a staff. At length one of
" them, being a fisherman, was, and, if he
" be alive, is, still able to follow that
" business. The other was a soldier under
" Sir William Godolphin, and died in the
" service of King Charles I.

" After this the well was superstitiously
" frequented, so that the rector of the
" neighbouring parish was forced to re-
" prove several of his parishioners for it.
" But accidentally meeting a woman
" coming from it with a bottle in her hand,
" and being troubled with cholical pains,
" desired to drink of it, and found himself
" cured of that distemper.

" The instances are too near our own
" time, and too well attested, to fall under

" the suspicion of bare traditions, or le-
" gendary fables: and, being so very re-
" markable, may well claim a place here.
" Only, 'tis worth our observation, that
" the last of them destroys the miracle;
" for, if he was cured upon accidentally
" tasting it, then the ceremonies of *offer-*
" *ing*, *lying on the ground*, &c., contributed
" nothing; and so the virtue of the water
" claims the whole remedy."

I suspect, that the patients who are said to have lain on the ground, did so under the altar of the church; as it was the custom in other cases of a similar kind. Borlase says, the water is simply pure, without any mineral impregnation, and rises through a stratum of grey moor-stone gravel. He adds, " Hither also, on much less justi-
" fiable errands (than to cure pains in the
" limbs), come the uneasy, impatient, and
" superstitious; and, by *dropping pins*, *or*
" *pebbles*, *into the water*, and by shaking
" the ground round the spring, so as to
" raise bubbles from the bottom, at a cer-
" tain time of the year, moon, and day,
" endeavour to settle such doubts and in-

" quiries as will not let the idle and anxious " rest." At St. Euny's well, which is similar in nature to that at St. Maddern's, the days were the *three first Wednesdays in May.*

From these accounts of holy wells, the effects of superstitious hopes and fears will be so manifest, that if some of them should have been deemed miraculous by an ignorant peasantry, and their confidence in the powers attributed to the wells strongly rooted in their minds; it will be recollected, that such prejudices are impressed on their imaginations from their infancy, and not easily overcome by a maturer understanding, unless assisted by information, and an experience which they seldom can attain. They are, therefore, more deserving of pity than of censure, and of information than reproof. But as to cures performed at Holywell in Flintshire, as there has been published a Narrative by Dr. Milner, the Romish Bishop of Castabala, in which it is asserted, that a late cure is miraculous, and an argument deduced from it, in favour of the doctrines

of the church of Rome; I have thought it necessary to make some observations on the statement of the case, and the arguments of Dr. Milner, and the more so, as, in an advertisement prefixed to the edition of the Narrative which I refer to (London, 1806), and dated May 1st, it is said, "The author has the satisfaction of here "declaring, that he has not met with, nor "heard of, a reader of any description, "who has controverted either the facts or "the reasoning contained in it." To this, I beg leave to answer, that silence is not always an argument of acquiescence; and that, had it not been intimated to me, that the silence respecting it, had been presumed upon in its favour, I should not have thought it necessary to notice it. In the same advertisement it is also said, that the publication "has met with the appro-"bation of his R. R. brethren;" this approbation has made it the more necessary to examine how far the Narrative is entitled to attention. This I have, therefore, endeavoured to do in a Work I have lately published, called, "Animadversions "on a Pamphlet, entitled, *Authentic Do-*

" *cuments relative to the Miraculous Cure*
" *of Winifred White (of Wolverhampton)*,
" *at St. Wenefrede's Well*, alias *Holywell, in*
" *Flintshire, on the 28th of June*, 1805."
London, 1814.

ST. WENEFREDE'S WELL,

AT

HOLYWELL, FLINTSHIRE.

WHATEVER may in former times have been the celebrity of the wells hitherto mentioned, the casual attention of a neighbouring peasant, and the traditional votive offering from a motive of superstitious regard, rather for an ancient custom than any respect for the wells, is in general the utmost they receive, excepting the nefarious practice at the well of Llanelian. They are now, in consequence of the better state knowledge, owing to the general perusal of the Scriptures, almost wholly neglected, and (their former supposed virtues and sacred character will probably in another generation be forgotten.) But, notwithstanding this extended prevalence of reason and religion, Holywell still exhibits no small share of the power of superstition over the

minds of the weak and the ignorant. Nor is this much to be wondered at, since it was here that the first efforts of the superstition of popery to fix itself in Wales were made. Here it took root and drew nourishment from those waters, of which it may be hard to determine, whether their virtues have been more salutary to the body or noxious to the soul. The earliest notice of this well extant, is in a legend of St. Wenefrede, by one Robert of Shrewsbury, who is supposed to have been an abbot of that town, from which it appears that the well had been dedicated to a St. Wenefrede, some time before he wrote, which was about the year 1140, as the dedication of the legend implies, if this could be depended upon; but it is most probably a fictitious reference intended to conceal the real date. What is known with any certainty, as to the history of the place, is as follows. Not long after that Hugh Lupus, earl of Chester, had seized on the maritime coast of Flintshire, the monks of the abbey of Chester, who, whatever were their errors, had a zeal for the promotion of their religion, such as it was, worthy of imitation in

a better cause, sent a few of their fraternity to perform the ecclesiastical duties of their religion for their countrymen, and to endeavour to convert the Welsh to it. For the latter purpose, it was necessary that they should fix themselves as nearly as possible to the bordering limit between the Welsh and English, and yet so as not to preclude a retreat if circumstances should compel them to it. With these views, no place on the coast afforded them a more desirable situation than Basingwerke, within a mile of Holywell. Here a small but pleasant fertile valley, open and gently descending on one side to an inlet of the sea which receives the river Dee, and separates the counties of Flint and Chester; on the other sides it is sheltered by hills that rise boldly and rapidly from the vale, and which at that time probably were thickly wooded to a great extent, as at present they are sufficiently so to embellish the scene. Through this valley the stream of Holywell, which bursts from the hill above, and is at its rise a river, flows by a short course to the sea. Thus sheltered from the colder winds, and delightfully secluded,

the spot possessed the advantages also of being in the vicinity of the Welsh, and, by the short distance from Cheshire, of an easy quick passage up the river to Chester with the tide. It has even been said that, about the time when the monks settled at Basingwerke, the river was very easily fordable across at low water, though, by the greater influx of the sea since, it is much less so, but not impossible; and I have seen a statement from observation, that in the seventeenth century the high-water mark was considerably raised in this channel. The monks, having made a prudential choice of Basingwerke, erected there a small convent at first, which had only a few small cells, and as such it is described by Giraldus, who, when Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, made a tour of Wales in order to invade the rights of the Welsh churches, and usurp a metropolitical power over them, accompanied the archbishop, and with him visited the place. Afterwards, by the benefactions of the earls of Chester and others, the convent was enlarged, and the abbey, of which there yet remains some part, was built, and stood till the reign of

Henry VIII., when it underwent the general fate of similar structures.

It might be questioned whether the salutary effects of the Holywell waters had been noticed previous to the settling of the monks near it; and I believe there is no trace to be found of any such notice in any authentic writings before that time. Yet as the stream is so remarkable, and as there are so many wells to which some Druidical superstition has been attached, it is not improbable that it was so here, if in the time of the Druids the source was inclosed and considered as a well. From the present form of the well, however, I am more inclined to believe that it was inclosed to form a baptistery by the primitive Welsh Christians, as this form corresponds with a baptistery still remaining among the ruins of an ancient chapel near St. Asaph. The ancient name seems to have been Gwenffrwd, that is, *the White Stream*, or Gwenffrewi, a name, I believe, of similar import. It may be fairly considered as certain, that the medical virtues of the water had not been attributed to any

saintly influence in the time of Giraldus. For no one could be more zealous than he appears to have been in legendary research, and a display of the information as to miracles which his curiosity had obtained during his peregrinations in Wales and Ireland; and yet he does not afford the slightest hint of the patronage of St. Wenefrede, which since his time has obtained such amazing celebrity. The legend cannot, therefore, be reasonably thought to have been known in his time; for had it been so, the monks would hardly have failed to have detailed to him the history of their patroness, or he to have divulged it; and the more eagerly, as legends were the favourite reading of the age, and the miracles asserted by the Romish clergy to be wrought by saints of their church, the proofs on which they insisted particularly as evidences of the truth of her doctrines; evidences, which, in an ignorant age, an age incapable of making the just distinction between miracles and imposture, were frequently admitted with a credulity almost as extraordinary as the absurdity of the

legends themselves. When such was the practice of the times; the proximity of a stream or well, whose waters were in many complaints of great efficacy, affered means of attraction too obvious to be overlooked. A legend is not a work of that texture to require a very scrupulous accuracy or delicate execution. To convert the name of the stream into that of a saint, president over it, and to invent a few extravagant wonders to be attributed to her, was all that was necessary. The sublime has been defined as the summit between grandeur and absurdity; and seldom has legend approached nearer to the sublime in the gradations on the less favourable side of the elevation. To this, as in my animadversions on a pamphlet of Dr. Milner's, I have already observed, the custom of exhibiting the subject of a legend in a dramatic form must have greatly contributed; and such, I have no doubt, was the case in this instance. The legend appears to have been written in Shrewsbury, and was probably there made the subject of a mystery, or sacred drama. At that time, as the clergy of the church of Rome were anxious

to draw the Welsh to join their communion, the same means were resorted to as had long before been employed in Llandaff. These were to endeavour to obtain relics of some Welsh person who had, when alive, been highly esteemed, as of holy life and manners; to enshrine these relics and make the original proprietary an object of devotion by canonization. In the cases of St. Teilo and St. Dubricius they had obtained them without difficulty from Bardsey; but in that of St. Wenefrede so many visions, in order to direct the search for her bones, are recounted that it is more than suspicious that the monks knew it was in vain to attempt more than to procure bones from Wales and give them a name. In fact no such name as that of St. Wenefrede is any where to be found in the Welsh writings extant, not even in the Welsh calendars of saints, though several of these are found in various collections. The Welsh did not worship saints, but had retained the doctrines of the primitive church in great purity. The Roman Catholic clergy probably were in some degree ignorant of this, or at least

they hoped to allure the Welsh by the compliment; though the result of the experiment was never in any degree successful, I believe, beyond the range of the immediate influence of English power.

The legend itself is briefly this, as given in a paper distributed at the well.

"That in the year 700 lived Wenefrede, "a virgin of extraordinary sanctity, who "made a vow of chastity during life, "and dedicated herself to the service of "God.

"A heathen prince, named Cradoc, "having often attempted Wenefrede's chas- "tity in vain, met her some time after "upon the top of the hill near Holywell "church, and struck off her head, which, "rolling down the hill, was taken up by "the priest of Holywell, who, being a fa- "vourite of the Almighty, did, by the di- "vine assistance, replace the head on We- "nefrede's shoulders, who was thereupon "restored to life, and lived fifteen years "afterwards.

"That at the very instant Wenefrede was
"restored to life, this spring arose in that
"very place, *no doubt*, in order to perpe-
"tuate the memory of so great an action,
"which caused the Christian religion to in-
"crease in a very extraordinary manner;
"and Wenefrede being made a saint, the
"holy priest of Holywell named the spring
"St. Wenefrede's well."

A more silly fabrication than this legend never perhaps insulted common sense, or made credulity ridiculous. It need not be denied that the lady's head, by rolling down so steep a hill, and such a length of way, with an accelerated velocity, may have acquired a force sufficient to displace a stone or other obstacle to the issuing of a spring, and the blow might have so stunned the head as to cause it to stop there; that is, supposing such a person ever did exist; but that her head should have been set on her shoulders again so exactly as it was before, and she have lived fifteen years afterwards, may perhaps be credited by those who believe that the stone on which she annually laid a cloak for St. Beuno,

swam away with it and carried it by sea to Carnarvonshire, and then swam back to Holywell (for this is a part of the story); but it is a belief more likely to render the sound mind of the believer doubtful.

That the waters are of great efficacy in many cases, was well known soon after the monks obtained a residence at Holywell, for their virtues are recorded in the legend as relieving all diseases arising from weakness of any kind, and hence, its repute being once raised by a legendary miracle, it has been more frequented than any other well in Wales.

The respect for wells in Scotland and Ireland has also long been and still is prevalent. It is a part of the same general Pagan superstition. In both it is a custom of the ignorant to visit them, and bits of rags, which they hang on bushes near the well, or small pieces of money*. In Ireland the wells near an old blasted oak, or an upright hewn stone, are most respected,

* Columbanus's third letter, page 83, &c.

and the visitants will crawl round these from East to West on their knees, three, six, or nine times, as a voluntary penance. Some of these ceremonies were also performed as the means of preserving cattle from disorders; of propitiating the fairies, and the rags appear to have been left in the hope of leaving with them any disorder with which the person who left the rags was affected, in the same manner as the cause of warts is supposed to be transferred to bits of stolen meat, or to grain, and when the meat or grain perishes to perish with them. In all these cases the origin was the superstition of Paganism, and the continuation of such practices, whether from custom or superstition, is equally a disgrace to a Christian country, and it is to be hoped that it will not endure much longer.

OMENS AND PREDICTIONS.

In common with every other nation, a regard for omens and predictions, has been very prevalent amongst the Welsh; but that for omens is now almost forgotten, except in a few retired situations; and the omens themselves, when attended to, differed little from those of their neighbours, and, therefore, need no particular description. With respect to predictions, it is far otherwise; as it might be expected in a nation which, for so many years, was encouraged to maintain the contest for its rights, by the predictions handed down from age to age, as those of infallible prophets, some of whom, probably, were Druids. After the happy termination of that contest, the attention to the ancient prophecies, no longer of importance than as subjects of curiosity, has been suspended; or rather diverted to other predictions which have nothing but the confidence of imposture to recommend them. A for-

tune-teller, or astrologer, is resorted to by the ignorant; when anxiety as to the future, is excited whether by hopes or fears, to learn what may be gained, or to recover what has been lost; and the power the impostors have over some minds, is sometimes prodigious. It cannot, however, be thought very strange, that they should find such credit in Wales, when, even in the metropolis of the kingdom, pretences of a similar kind, have not long ago drawn crowds of visitors, solicitous as to their destiny. Whatever may be the degree of information attributed to the age, this is no favourable symptom as to its religious state, for a belief in fatalism is too frequently the consequence of a dereliction of the hope and dependence which religion inspires. It may, therefore, be of some use to shew how unfounded and imaginary the principles of this pretended science are, and how vain the hope of gaining real information from it as to the future is; and as it may also tend, in some degree, to elucidate the history of astronomy, an investigation of the first principles of astrology is subjoined.

AN ESSAY ON ASTROLOGY.

An inquisitiveness as to future events is, in some degree, a necessary consequence of the importance we attach to them, and where they depend on circumstances which we cannot regulate, a power which we cannot evade, and a will which we can neither scrutinize nor control; the anxiety will increase according to the magnitude of our hopes and fears. Hence, in all ages, some means have been resorted to for the discovery of that which was to come; and, as with our limited knowledge and observation, we are able, in some measure, to foresee what will follow from particular circumstances or modes of action, in which persons of certain dispositions are engaged, and also to determine the regular effects of physical causes; it is readily inferred that beings of a higher order, and endowed with a much more extensive intelligence

may and must be able to discern much to which our faculties cannot attain. From the connexion of cause and effect, a most dangerous supposition, that all things are but so many links in an established, universal series of necessary consequences, has been also inferred; which, if the absurdity of the conclusion be admitted to argue an error in the premises, whether the error be perceived or not, cannot be true; and it is absurd, that man should have the consciousness of acting as a free agent, and should conduct himself towards others as such, on the principle, that they have a similar consciousness, were it not so in reality. It is also evidently a most dangerous principle, as being destructive of all merit or demerit; and is contradicted by every legal institution, whether divine or human; because a law presupposes free agency. Nor is this incompatible with a general plan of action, or a particular determination of certain events; but, on the contrary, the great use of free agency is the power it has of forming a plan of action, and according to the wisdom and power of the agent inducing events, which

man, as a free agent, must, within certain limits, be able to do. Beyond this limit, his own knowledge cannot go, and hence he has endeavoured to learn it by other means. Calling imagination to his aid, he soon forms an easy theory from any repetition of one pleasant or unpleasant circumstance having soon succeeded, to one which was singular or uncommon. Did a victory follow after that an eagle had hovered over an army, or perched on its standard; the eagle became the omen of conquest. Did a gloomy dream disturb the rest of an anxious mind, and evil previous in the apprehension follow; the dream was predictive. Do the heavenly bodies regulate the times of human actions, and measure their existence; has any one, whose birth was marked by the rising sun, risen to pre-eminence, and ran a course of glory; the heavenly bodies indicated the fate of mortal life, by their appearance at his birth. Such was, probably, some event which gave the first idea of astrological observation; but there must have been something much more important to have excited the attention to such a

degree, that astrology should have become a scientific pursuit, and deemed worthy of the study of the learned; some respect in which a real knowledge of a connexion, or at least a correspondence, generally certain between particular celestial phenomena and events important to be made, had encouraged the hope of discovering other correspondencies, and given confidence to other predictions, than those in which they were justified by events. This justification I conceive it to have found originally in medical observation, and particularly in cases of epilepsy and fever. The fits of epilepsy or madness and the paroxysms and *crises* of fevers, have too evident a dependence on, or relation to, the age of the moon to have remained long unobserved by physicians. The recurrence of the fits at the full of the moon is so well known, that the disorder, or the person afflicted by it, is, in many languages, distinguished by a term denoting an effect of the moon, as *lunacy*, moon-struck, &c., even in common conversation, and the correspondence observed to exist between the paroxysms and crises of fever, and the

age of the moon, which have been often noticed, but particularly by Dr. Barlow, in his Letter on the Fever of India, addressed to the East-India Company, in so very able and satisfactory a manner as to leave no doubt of the fact.

A man who is actuated by a spirit of research, is not likely to rest satisfied with the gratification of the single discovery of an interesting fact; but, on the contrary, is much more disposed to consider it as opening the path to an extensive though unknown region, which may well reward the labour of research: whither it may lead is at first but conjecture; but the hope of success ultimately, will excite the imagination to draw inferences from every circumstance, and to form some kind of hypothesis, as the guide to further progress. Whether any hypothesis be right or wrong, true or false, must depend on experimental or other rational proof; and had the certainty of proof equalled the ingenuity of the hypothesis, astrology might have claimed a place in the first rank of science. Still though it be, as it certainly is, desti-

tute of proof as to the fundamental principles, yet the mode of reasoning adopted in laying them down, as far as it can be collected from the principles, is not without sufficient plausibility to amuse and interest. Some of its rules are such as to throw light on the history of astronomy; and others might, perhaps, be attended to by the physician and the naturalist with advantage; and these it will be my endeavour to point out.

When the influence of the moon on disease was found to be an established fact, and more especially, that in cases of lunacy, this influence affected the mind upon which the government and regulation of conduct, and so far the fortune of life, depend; it was no great extravagance of the imagination to *suppose*, that its effects on the mind and body of the infant at its birth, when both might be presumed to be in the weakest state, and most susceptible of impression, did determine the degree of their strength or weakness through life, and therefore, the fate of the infant as it depended on these. In aid of this sup-

position, the obvious comparison of the changes of the moon to the mutability of fortune, could not but appear as corroborating its probability. But, however great the influence of the moon, its light was borrowed, and its influence, probably, controled by the sun; apparently the lord of the world, and source of life; uniform in his appearance, regular in his course, and beneficent in his power, and unrivalled in visible splendour. To his influence, therefore, correspondent benefits only could be attributed. Another correspondence was easily deducible from the resemblance of the period of human life to the diurnal or revolutional periods of the heavenly bodies; and hence the influence of each also was *supposed* to be the most favourable to man, when its apparent splendour is greatest; that is, when on the meridian, and their combined influence most powerful in conjunctions, and least in opposition, if of different kinds, it being estimated in the first case as the sum, and in the second, as the difference of their respective powers, but in both cases prejudicial. In the intermediate positions, the

combined influence was consequently estimated by the interval. That this was so, is clearly perceived from the place to which the fortune of life is referred in astrological delineations of the places of the heavenly bodies. For the sun being the promoter of life, and the moon significant of its variations as to good or ill, as nearer to, or more remote from, the sun, or rather significant of diminution of good (its known influence in disease being of a prejudicial kind); the place of fortune is estimated by the distance of the moon from the sun, and therefore, according to the *supposed* effect of their combined influence on human life in general.

When conjecture had proceeded thus far in forming a system, an application of the same mode of reasoning to the stars then known as planets, was too necessary and too natural to be overlooked, or omitted. It was too necessary, because that variations of the places of two bodies only, could not be accommodated to the multiplicity of the variations in life; and it was too natural, because their revolu-

tions seemed analogous to those of the moon, though of different periods. If, like her, they had proper motions, their being so distinguished from other stars seemed to intimate, that they had proper influences also; and if the distance of the moon from the earth did not preclude her influence, it did not appear why their greater distance should hinder their influence, since it did not prevent their light from pervading that space. Here a new *supposition* as to the nature of the particular influence of each was necessary to the system, and as the nature of that of the sun and moon had been inferred from their phenomena, so was that of the planets. Other means they could not have, except by revelation, or by observations, which would demand an attention, and discrimination, and mechanical aid, perhaps, beyond the human powers, and a length of time beyond the acknowledged duration of the world to complete them, if there were such influence. But we have no reason to imagine, that any revelation was ever given on the subject; and, from the influences attributed to the planets, it is

evident, that they were merely inferred from their phenomena, upon *the supposition*, that the phenomena were intended to indicate the influence of each respectively. Thus from Mercury's celerity of motion and proximity to the sun, this planet was made the significator of genius, and the qualifications which attend it according to the good or bad use made of it. In like manner the brilliancy of Venus caused it to be esteemed the significator of beauty, and its consequences. Mars, in like manner, of war, or warlike disposition, from his ruddy colour. The steady and magnificent light of Jupiter could not fail to claim for him the seat of supremacy, and, accordingly, he is made the significator of power and dignity, calm, generous, and firm; while, on the contrary, by the dusky hue of Saturn, the sluggish motion, and comparatively depressed station of his greatest northern latitude, he acquired the character of signifying gloom, misfortune, calamity, and death. All these characters are so simply and readily deducible in this manner, as to leave no doubt but that they were so deduced, and, in the application,

modified as observation or fancy connected particular features, or other peculiarities of person, with those which were presumed to be the predominant qualities of the mind; and such are those which are to be found in treatises on astrology.

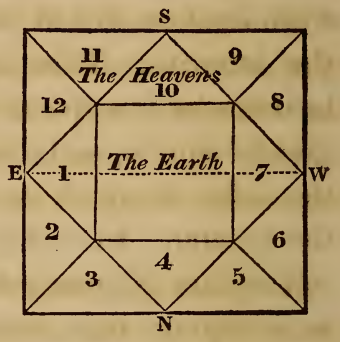
Such a system, whenever it had to any degree taken hold of the mind, could not be put to any practical use without the aid of astronomy. For if the influences of the heavenly bodies were greatest when they were in the meridian, and diminished in proportion to their distance from it; the calculation of a nativity required the knowledge of their places at the time.

There are many books which treat of the history of astronomy, and of these I have met with none more entertaining, or more full of information, than those of Mr. Costard and the Abbé Le Pluche, but none of them have, I believe, much, if at all, noticed some curious intimations which may be collected from its practical use in astrology.

Of these, the first which presents itself to consideration, is the astrological scheme of the heavens. This figure represents the heavens by the space included between a greater square, and a lesser square within it, the sides of which are parallel to those of the greater. In this figure, then, the interior square originally represented the earth as a square area, surrounded by the heavens; this is the representation given of it in some of the Hindu delineations, and it is probably the first mode in which it was attempted to give one, and from which we can understand, that the scriptural expression of *The four corners of the earth*, was used in conformity to a received idea, that the earth was square. Another idea of the Hindus is, that in the middle of this square earth the mountain Meru rises, so large and to such a height, that its shadow, as the sun revolves around it, causes the night of those who are in the shadow.

As the year consists of twelve lunar months upon a rough computation, the scheme of the heavens was divided into

twelve compartments, which are called *houses*, as in the annexed figure; but this kind of figure received no further improvement, and being useless in a more advanced state



of astronomical knowledge, it has been retained only in astrology, and is now interesting chiefly as affording a reference to the original seat of astrological science, and a specimen of the earliest conceptions and attempts in the study of astronomy, certainly previous to the use of the circle, as the square could never have superseded the circle; whereas the reverse was what might have been expected. In the figure the numbers mark the twelve *houses* in the same sense, and in the like manner, as the Hindu astronomers use the word mansions when they speak of the *mansions of the moon*, for so many portions of a revolution; and the order of the houses is according to the proper motion of the planets in their orbits, viz., from west to east. In this figure the dotted line E W

will represent the horizon; the upper half of the squares E S W, the illuminated half of the earth and heavens at midday to the observer, and the other half the obscured; that is, according to the idea of the earth's being in this form.

But, though the order of the houses is according to the proper motion of the planets, the order of the progress of human life, was from the obvious comparison of it to the diurnal course of the sun, made to agree with it. Hence the commencement of life is referred to the east, its meridian to the south, and its decline to the west; and, as it has already been observed, the favourable places or circumstances indicated the southern, and the unfavourable to the northern half; as any treatise on the subject will shew.

From this division of the figure no precision in astronomy was to be obtained; and even in astrology, when observation had attained to a more correct notion of the form of the earth, and applied the results of observation to its own use, the

European astrologers, instead of substituting a more commodious figure, retained this; and contented themselves by noting the place of a planet in any sign or house, by writing the degrees and minutes denoting the place, and prefixing the character of the planet. This pertinacious adherence to so rude a figure can only be accounted for by that prejudice in favour of old-established rules; and frequently a salutary one, common to the majority of mankind. It is, however, in this case, the more remarkable, as it appears from Vol. II. of the Asiatic Researches, that in a Hindu Zodiac, the earth, though conceived to be a plain, is bounded by a circle, and an exterior concentric circle bounds the heavens, the signs of the zodiac being marked on this last. When the substitution of the circle for the square had taken place, the circle being divided into twelve equal portions, answering to the twelve signs of the zodiac, or the twelve months of the year, it seems that the length of the lunar month had not even been so nearly observed, as to be estimated at thirty days. For Scaliger*

* Note on Manilius, pages 178, 9.

has shewn, that the Egyptian astrologers divided each sign, not into *thirty* degrees, or equal portions, but into *twelve*, adhering, it may be presumed, to the first number which marked a division of the circle, when it was to be subdivided. In general the first idea is in such cases pursued, unless some necessity interrupts it, as in the subdivision by tens of decimals, and by sixties of minutes. And thus the subdivision by twelve, was applied to the day and to the night, each being divided into twelve hours, and * the hours also were divided, in like manner, into twelfth parts.

It may be urged, indeed, that the first astronomical instruments did not admit of a lesser subdivision; but this affords no reason why the subdivisions were carried on by twelfths, rather than the simple ones by bisection; and the substitution of the division into thirty degrees, therefore, must have been a substitution, when the lunar

* Manilius, page 244.

month was observed to be so nearly thirty days, as to have been so reckoned. According to the account of the deluge, as given by Moses, the year was of 360 days, and perhaps before that event, the lunar month was of 30; and if so, the tradition of the subdivision of the circle by twelve, may have been an antediluvian one. But this kind of conjecture is too uncertain to be of any use, as it can only be conjecture. It may, however, be something more than conjecture to observe, that as the twelve degrees into which each sign appears to have been originally divided, were, for more accuracy, subdivided into halves, so also the thirty degrees of each sign appear to have been halved also; and hence, there being 60 of these subdivisions in a sign, the custom of subdividing degrees, &c., into sixtieths, seems to have arisen.

A curious instance of this subdivision appears in an old cabalistic disposition of the letters of three verses in Exodus, each of which contains seventy-two letters. The

letters are arranged in threes, viz., one from each verse, as to form ten sets of words (each word consisting of three letters), and each set consisting of seventy-two words, in all 720 words, and 2,160 letters, which letters are numerical. The whole of these sets are given by Galatinus, who, on the authority of the rabbins, says, they are many names, or titles of the Deity, and, as such, gives significations of them, many of which are forced, and none of which could be of any particular use. Their real use I therefore conclude to have been, for astronomical calculation; as, I believe, the greater part of cabalistic words were originally; though the cabalists, to conceal their knowledge, made use of supposed names of the Deity, and of other spirits, good or evil, to record their astronomical system, their methods of calculation, &c. The cabalistic sets of words, or, as I presume, tables, appear to be more ancient than the time of Hillel, to whom Bishop Beveridge, in his Chronology, assigns the known Jewish method of astronomical calculation; for, in this last, the hour is divided into 1080 he-

lakim, or parts, which is equal to $\frac{2160}{2160}$ or 720×3, and seems to have been preferred, as a more convenient number for use than 720 or 2,160, which were, I presume, prior subdivisions of degrees and hour, and relinquished in favour of one more useful. The bishop says, that this number was adopted, because it is divisible by every number from one to ten, except seven, and the subdivision by 60, because 60 is divisible by 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6; which is a sufficient reason in itself, though that which has been already given, seems to have led to it.

This subdivision was carried still further by the Egyptians. Scaliger says, they divided a degree of the ecliptic into 214,000 parts, and, consequently, the ecliptic into 7,704,000 parts; and, in estimating the degrees in the proportional parts of the equator, or any parallel circles which were above and below the horizon, they first divided twelve into two numbers proportional to these two parts, *e. g.*, 12 into 7 and 5; and then calculated the de-

grees, by finding the proportion of 1080 (=12×90) to 7,704,000. In stating this, Scaliger, who, though he corrects the number as given by Firmicus, by reading quadringenta for quadraginta, considers the notice taken of this mode of computation by Manilius as superfluous, has treated it as such; for a moment's reflection would have sufficed to have shewn him not only that 1080 is no proportional part of 7,704,000, but that the latter number is erroneous, and certainly should be, I believe, 7,776,000, =360×60×30×12, or 1080×2×60×60=2160×60×60, according to which the degree will consist not of 21,400, but of 21,600 parts, or of 1080×2 parts, and the number 1080 be an aliquot part of the greater number.

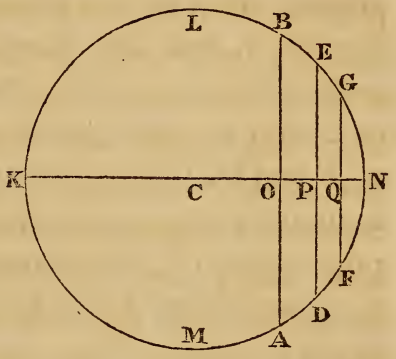
The subsequent progress of astronomical science, needs no detail here; I therefore proceed to the means of calculating the influence of the heavenly bodies on man, which were adopted by astrologers.

The suppositions made as to the real

magnitudes and distances of the sun and planets, when astronomy was in its infancy, could be of little or no use in calculations of their influences; and in astrology, neither magnitudes nor distances were attended to in calculation, nor does even a conjecture respecting either seem to have been made when the astrological method of calculating the influences was fixed. Yet it displays an ingenuity in the inventor which, with a better knowledge, would have been capable of making great improvements in science, and which none of his successors, in the same study, was fortunate enough to possess; and it also shews, that in his time the circle was brought into use.

When it had been assumed, that the combined influence of any two heavenly bodies was equal to the sum of their single influences when those bodies were in conjunction, and to the difference when in opposition, to find the combined influence when in other situations they proceeded

thus. Having described a circle to represent the ecliptic, they described in it a triangle, a square, and a hexagon; and the bases of all three being parallel to each



other, and a radius being drawn perpendicular to these bases, the portions of the radius extending from the centre to either of these bases, was made to represent the inverse ratio of the combined influence of any two bodies so situated in the circle at the interval denoted by such base. Thus, in the annexed figure, if in the circle K L M N, of which C is the centre, the lines A B, D E, and F G, be respectively the sides of the inscribed triangle, square, and hexagon, it is evident that the side of the triangle is nearer to the centre than that of the square, and the side of the square than that of the hexagon, their distances being as C O, C P, and C Q, or nearly as 5, 7, 8, and the influence of the

nearest to the centre being considered the greatest, that of two planets, one of which was at A, and the other at B, was to be considered as greater than if they were at D and E, and greater at D and E than at F and G, that is, greater in trine than in quartile, and in quartile in the inverse proportion of the distances. The trine was also thought the most favourable, as equally remote from the conjunction or opposition. It was unnecessary to introduce other figures, as the side of a hexagon subtends two signs, that of the square three, and that of the trigon four.

Hence in the astrological schemes of nativities, the places of the heavenly bodies being found by calculation, and so noted in the scheme, their favourable aspects, or the contrary, and their influences, or predictive intimations, were estimated according to their respective and relative places and influences.

Though in these progressive steps towards scientific knowledge, it is interesting to observe how fertile the human mind is

in conjecture and resources; and how strongly, and almost indelibly, original prepossessions and ideas must have been impressed upon it, and adhered to, since they are still discernible; yet that the principles on which astrological predictions were founded were entirely imaginary, excepting those which experience proved the two great luminaries to have on diseases, and that even the principles on which their effect in these cases were calculated, were erroneous, will be abundantly evident from the origin to which they have in the foregoing observations been traced.

To pursue the subject further, as to the progress of astrology, would be idle and useless; it shall, therefore, suffice to notice a few circumstances which may, perhaps, be found not wholly unworthy of attention, though connected with so fallacious and absurd a study as astrology.

I. In the calculation of the places of the planets it is remarkable, that a sign was, in the most ancient method, said to ascend above the horizon regularly every

two hours. This, Manilius says, was the common or vulgar opinion, which he justly states to be erroneous; but a common opinion in such cases is generally a traditional one; and this may be so esteemed. But it could not be the traditional opinion of Italy or Greece, where the inequalities of the length of days recurred too frequently for any such tradition ever to have originated there. It could have originated only where the disparity was so small, as that the days and nights should, to the first astrologers, have appeared constantly to be so nearly equal, as without a gross error in a rude calculation, might be so estimated. This is also confirmed by the similar tradition of the divisions of the day and night into twelve equal hours each, and by the oriental figure of the scheme of the heavens.

Bishop Horsley, in his exquisite tract on a passage in Virgil, has most ingeniously deduced from a tradition as to the appearance of Procyon, that it must have originated in the latitude of 13° north, and with this the above-mentioned traditions, as those of

astronomy or astrology in the infancy of science agree sufficiently, as in that latitude the greatest difference of the length of the longest and shortest day is 1^h 34^m; and consequently, the difference of the hour, or twelfth part of the longest day, and that of the shortest, does not exceed eight minutes, which is so small a difference, that, in the first age of the science, it probably was not well known, or if at all known, was not taken into calculation.

If these traditions be admitted, as traditions of the fathers of astronomy, the origin of the science must be referred either to Africa, the most southern part of Arabia, or Hindostan; and as the Hindus alone, as far as I know, have preserved such a traditional idea of the form of the earth, viz., a square plain, as agrees with and explains, the astrological figure; this seems to have originated with them.

II. A second inference may be drawn from the preceding observations, as to a tradition of the Babylonians and the Caucasian astronomers, mentioned by Cicero

in his Tract on Divination, viz., that they had memorials extending as far back as 470,000 years. The exaggeration in the number of years is justly ridiculed by Cicero, if his report was correct. But may he not have misconceived the import of the words? May not the assertion of these astronomers have been, that their record of years went back as far as 470,000 of the divisions, that is, of the least divisions of the zodiac?

If this number be divided by 21,600, or 21,400, the number of these least divisions in a degree, the quotient will be 21,76 or 21,96, degrees of the zodiac, or, more properly, of the ecliptic, which, estimating the precession of the equinoxes at one degree in 72 years, the time of the precession over 21,7 or 21,9 degrees, would be 1,576 or 1,569 years. Hence, as Cicero died B. C. 42, it will not be wholly inconsistent with probability to infer, that the Babylonians referred to an epoch from which the vernal intersection of the equator and ecliptic had passed over about 22 degrees, the date of which epoch is about 1,600

years B. C. This explanation, if it does no more, will reconcile the tradition with other accounts of the early study of astronomy by the Babylonians, so as to bring the possibility of the truth of the tradition within the limits of authentic history.

III. When astrology was applied to medical uses, it appears, that the characters used to denote the several planets, were also used to denote what were conceived to be correspondent effects of herbs in medicine. Thus, an herb said to be under the dominion of the sun, signifies, that it is corroborant, &c., and the character ☉, seems to have been used as the secret note of the properties of such an herb. These characters may, perhaps, still be so far useful, as denoted the opinion of a medical man of the virtues of a plant, according to his experience, or received tradition.

IV. As the medical astrologers seem to have attended with great care to the influence of the moon on disorders, it may perhaps be worth while to compare what

they have said concerning this and other subjects, mentioned by Mr. Barlow; as it seems to be from such observations as to the lunar month originally, that the lucky and unlucky days of the month were noted, and from the lunar month transferred to the calendar month, and, consequently, displaced. It is remarkable, that the 15th, 19th, 20th, and 21st, are noted as the chief unlucky days; and these are the days of full moon, and the days preceding the last quarter; and in fever, the 15th, 19th, and 21st days, are critical; and hence it may, without much risk, be concluded, that the unfavourable days of the moon's age in disease, were supposed to be unfavourable in other respects, and that, for a like reason, Saturday, or the seventh day of the moon was unpropitious. Perhaps similar observations as to the weather might be traced to somewhat like a regular prognostication. Old St. Swithin's day was the 15th after the summer solstice. Did the tradition respecting it relate to the fifteenth day, or the second change of the moon after this solstice?

For the benefit of believers in astrological predictions, I will offer the following narrative, which is taken from Scaliger's preface to Manilius.

Note what occurred in A. D. 1179, when all the astrologers of the east, whether Christians, Jews, or Saracens, sent out letters as if they had been royal despatches, or proclamations, to every part of the world, in which they predicted, that the seventh year following, viz., A. D. 1186, there would be such disastrous storms and tempests, that the general apprehension throughout these seven years imbittered human life. For the astrologers announced that there would be a great conjunction of all the planets, superior and inferior, in the month of September, which would be preceded by an eclipse of the sun, on the 19th of April in that year. In short, such was the terror raised by the prediction, that it was believed by every one, that the end of the world was undoubtedly at hand. But, according to Rigordus, who published two of their letters, and outlived the predicted time, by many years, the event completely

exposed the vanity of astrologic science. I will now conclude with observing, that as Nostradamus lived in an age when astrology was in high repute, it is most probable, that his prophecies are quatrains, composed so as to express his judgments of events founded on the appearances or schemes of the heavens, successively calculated and delineated according to the astrological system of the times. It is scarcely possible otherwise to account for the amazing variety of his predictions. It would have been very surprising if, out of the nine hundred stanzas, each of which, in general, contain several prophecies, some resemblance to some events could not have been made out, and yet very little has, though he gave them every advantage, that obscure expression could give to judgments derived from the most fallible of all means of acquiring information.



I. Havell sculp.

THE BOW OF WAR & PEACE.

Published 25 August, 1814 by E. Williams, Strand.

THE BOW OF WAR AND PEACE.

It frequently happens that traces of ancient but obsolete customs, may be perceived in proverbial expressions, which, though used in a secondary sense, and without any reference in the mind of the speaker to the literal or original meaning, do nevertheless suffer that original application, or the cause of it, to appear. Of this kind are the expressions which I am now about to produce relative to the proclamation of war and peace. By historians we are informed, that at such and such times either was proclaimed, but of the manner in which it was so in Britain, neither Cæsar nor any later historian, that I know of, has taken any notice; though it is an obvious subject of inquiry, how, in in those times, intelligence of so great importance, could be conveyed with the necessary despatch, and in such a manner as to be sufficiently public and intelligible

This, in the time of Howel Dda, is said to have been done by the sound of the horn, as in later times by the sound of the trumpet; but there appears to have been a more ancient mode, which was not the less advantageous because more simple. Lewis o'r Glynn, a Welsh poet, speaking of a proclamation of war, says,

> Bwa rhadded drwy holl Brydain.
> *A bow was sent throughout all Britain.*

There is also a proverbial expression still in use in directing a person to take the straight road, viz.,

> Ewch o hyd y bwa hedd.
> *Go along the bow of peace.*

From a comparison of these two expressions it is not a rash conclusion to infer, that when war was to be proclaimed, couriers were sent in different directions, each bearing and displaying a bent bow; and in proclaiming peace, a bow unstrung, and therefore straight, as intimated in the latter expression. The bow was thus the emblem of either state, of war or peace, and, when exhibited, was a sign which none

could fail to understand, and none which the summoned would dare to disobey. To hold it out to a multitude was sufficient to declare its purpose, nor will there easily be found, in any of the various methods adopted by different nations, with the like intent, one more simple, more elegant, or more effectual.

Another Welsh proverbial expression conveys the idea, that captives had once been sometimes sacrificed. The expression is, " Bwrw caeth i gythraul," that is, " to " devote the captive to the evil spirit," an expression which, though in its present use it signifies no more than " that the weak " are treated contemptuously by the " strong," does, in its literal sense, indicate but too clearly, that in Pagan times captives had been sacrificed, and that this sacrifice was offered to a spirit, supposed to be of a malignant disposition.

ADDENDA.

DELINEATION OF THE CITY OF TROY.

The same figure is given as that of the Cretan Labyrinth, on a Gem delineated in the Museo Fiorentino, Vol. III.; and in Vol. II., p. 480, of the Asiatic Researches, it is said to have been originally used in the Hindu astrology, but how it was appropriated is not mentioned. The fact, however, is curious, as it shews the great antiquity of this singular figure, which, as the lines are eight, marking the boundaries of seven walls, according to the tradition; seems to have been originally intended to denote so many spheres of the heavens.

TEMPLE AT CARNAC.

At Carnac (in Egypt), which is a part of the ancient Thebes, there are ruins of a most magnificent temple. Pococke, Vol. I. p. 91. From the extent of the ruins in both places, and the temple at Carnac in

France's, bearing the same appellation as the temple in Egypt, there can be no doubt, but that the worship in both was of the same kind.

ADDITION TO THE ESSAY ON FAIRIES.

That the manner in which the supposed existence of fairies as supernatural beings is accounted for here, is not destitute of probability, the following note, taken from Mr. Scott's Minstrelsy, Vol. II., p. 176, will shew :—

" Perhaps in this (of Gyrfing), and si-
" milar tales, we may recognise something
" of real history. That the Fins, or an-
" cient nations of Scandinavia, were driven
" into the mountains by the invasion of
" Odin and his Asiatics, is extremely pro-
" bable. It is, therefore possible, that in
" process of time, the oppressed Fins may
" have been transformed into the super-
" natural Duergar (Elves). A similar
" transformation has taken place among
" the vulgar in Scotland, regarding the
" Picts, or Pecks, to whom they ascribe
" various supernatural attributes.

ADDITION TO THE ACCOUNT

OF

ST. ALMEDHA.

In my translation of the British Chronicle, (Col. Camb., page 52, Note 2), I have observed, that from an expression in the text respecting masons, it seemed probable to me, that the artificers of Britain were formed into companies in the early time; and the processions of such companies, though made religious processions in the times of Christianity, are, it may be presumed, of much more ancient date. The latest that I have heard of in this country, is that known by the name of the Shrewsbury Show, of which the following account is given in one of the best local histories that has come to my knowledge, though published in 1808, under the modest title of, Some Account of the Ancient and Present State of Shrewsbury.

" It was, from remote times, customary " for all the companies to unite in cele- " bration of the day of Corpus-Christi, the " feast of the holy sacrament of the body " of our Lord," the next Thursday after Trinity Sunday, " one of the most splen- " did festivals of the Roman church, as " their grand anniversary. Preceded by " their masters and wardens, and graced " with colours and devices, they attended " the bailiffs and members of the corpo- " ration, who, with the canons of St. Chad " and St. Mary, and the friars of the three " convents, and the parochial clergy, fol- " lowed the holy sacrament, which was " borne by priests, under a rich canopy of " velvet or silk, to a stone cross without " the town; probably that called the " Weeping Cross. Here all joined in be- " wailing their sins, and in chanting forth " petitions for a plentiful harvest; they " then proceeded in the same order to the " church of St. Chad, where each com- " pany had a particular place in its choir, " and a grand mass was celebrated. Se- " veral of the trades were obliged to pro

" vide necessaries for this procession, par-
" ticularly wax-tapers, which were carried
" before the host, and afterwards placed
" on the altar of St. Michael, in St. Chad's
" church. The festival was followed by
" three days of disport and recreation, as
" they were termed, either in the ensuing
" week, *or at an early time*, agreed upon
" by the several wardens. These were held
" on the piece of ground called King's
" Land, where each company had its
" arbour, and where all regaled the bailiffs
" and corporation.

" After the Reformation, the religious
" ceremony was of course abolished; but
" one day of entertainment is still observed,
" under the denomination of the Show,
" and is always on the second Monday
" after Trinity Sunday. The companies
" assemble about noon before the castle,
" accompanied by their wardens, with
" flags, devices, and music; most of them
" having also a man on horseback, gaudily
" dressed, called the king, intended origin-
" ally, perhaps, for a representation of the

" monarchs who granted their charters.
" Thus the king of the clothworkers per-
" sonates Edward IV.; the king of the
" masons, Henry VIII.; the barbers' march
" with a queen, perhaps, our celebrated
" Lady Elizabeth. The devices are em-
" blematical of the trades. The sadlers
" lead a caparisoned horse; the smiths and
" armourers are preceded by a knight in
" complete harness; the hatters and fur-
" riers by an American Indian; the skin-
" ners by the figure of a stag as large as
" life, attended by huntsmen sounding
" bugle-horns. The procession moves
" over the Welsh bridge to Kingsland,
" where each company has its enclosed
" arbour or pavilion, adorned with the
" arms of the company, in which a cold
" dinner is prepared. These are visited
" by the mayor and corporation, who
" used formerly to wear their robes of
" office upon this occasion. They go on
" horseback, preceded by the beadles,
" crier, &c., bareheaded, and are hospitably
" entertained at the arbours of their re-
" spective trades. The day is spent in

" festivity, and, towards the close of the " evening, the companies leave this de- " lightful spot, returning to the town over " the abbey-bridge." Page 63.



I. Havell sculp.t

ANCIENT METHOD OF REAPING.

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METHOD OF REAPING.

GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS says, that the Welsh, in his time, seldom reaped with the sickle, being able to perform the work more expeditiously by a blade of moderate length, formed like a knife, and attached by a chain at each end, to two handles or staves, so as to play freely. *Descrip. of Wales, Chap.* 17.

This description is by no means sufficiently accurate to give any clear idea, either of the instrument or the manner in which it was employed. But, from the following figure, which was drawn from a sculpture, on a seat in Malvern church, both may be better understood.

In this sketch, *a* and *b* are the two staves, *c* the knife or hook somewhat circular, and attached to the end of *a*, and somewhat higher up to *b*. The stalk of

the head of corn *d*, appears to be caught between the knife and the lower end of the staff *b*, and that it was to be cut off by drawing up the staff *a*, as, by that means, the stalk would be caught between the knife and staff. Still, though perhaps capable of improvement, it seems to have been but an awkward instrument, and to have required some dexterity in the use of it.

ADDENDA
TO THE ESSAY ON ASTROLOGY.

When the passage respecting Nostradamus was written, as I had it not then in my power to consult his prophecies, the idea of their being founded on astrological calculations was, to the best of my recollection, merely conjectural; I have since found that this was the fact, as it is acknowledged by him in dedication to his prophecies, and that in this dedication he gives us, from his own calculation, founded partly on astrological principles, and partly (though undoubtedly principally) on the book of Revelations, the date of the commencement of a great revolution in the state of the world, which, considering that he wrote in the middle of the sixteenth century, may justly be looked upon as very remarkable. It will, however, be observable, that in the astrological part, he has been as much mistaken as to his deductions, as he has been near the truth, where he has depended on revela-

tion only. Having stated the positions of the heavenly bodies, in a year to which he gives no further designation than, that there shall be no eclipse, he proceeds, as to subsequent events, to give his opinion, of part of which the following is a translation :—

" In the beginning of this year, a per-
" secution, more violent than that of
" Africa, shall afflict the Christian church,
" which shall continue until the year 1792,
" which shall be noted as the renovation
" of the age the Romans shall begin to
" regain power, to dispel some obscuri-
" ties, recovering somewhat of their an-
" cient celebrity, though not without great
" dissensions and continual changes; then
" Venice, in great force and power, will
" soar far above ancient Rome. And
" at this time, and in these countries,
" the infernal powers shall excite the
" power of its adversaries, which will be
" the second Antichrist, against the
" church, and will persecute the church,
" and its true Vicar, by means of temporal
" kings, who shall be led astray by their

" ignorance, and by tongues that wound
" more deeply than the sword in the hand
" of the insane. At length the third nor-
" thern king, hearing the complaint of the
" people of his chief title, shall raise a
" great army, and pass beyond the boun-
" daries of his ancestors, and restore the
" greater part (of the troubled world) to
" its proper state, and the Vicar of the
" cap *(cappe)* to his former state, but
" desolate, and then abandoned of all,
" and the Sancta Sanctorum shall be
" destroyed by paganism, the Old and
" New Testament shall be prohibited and
" burned, after which the infernal prince
" shall be antichrist, and once more, and
" for the last time, all the realms of
" Christianity and paganism shall tremble
" for the space of twenty-five years, and
" and there shall be the most dreadful
" wars and battles, towns, cities, and
" castles, burned, &c. And, after these
" evils shall have endured long, the age
" of Saturn and golden age, as it were,
" shall be renewed."

Propheties de Nostradamus,
Ed. 12*mo. Paris,* 1668.

In the preceding extract it is evident, that the prediction as to Venice was drawn from his astrological figure, constructed for the time, in which the fanciful reference of the signs, and planets in them, to particular places, was his guide; and, as might justly be expected, has proved a very fallacious one. The rest seems to have been principally derived from Scripture, and the close approximation in calculating the 1,260 years as ending in A. D., 1792, in which, I believe, he is very nearly right, will appear the more extraordinary when it is observed, that he dates the dedication in June, 1558, when the subject had been so little canvassed.

MARY THOMAS,

THE FASTING WOMAN, NEAR DOLGELLEY.

Of the various affections of the physical system of the human body, there is, perhaps, no one which excites more curiosity, or more difficult to explain, than that by which life is continued for many years, without the degree of sustenance upon which, except in a very few instances, the continuation of life is known to depend. That it should appear supernatural to the ignorant is not surprising, when to the most learned and ingenious it presents a phenomenon, the possibiliy of which has frequently been doubted; and as to which, so much investigation has been thought necessary to ascertain the fact. In cases of such rare occurrence, it is of importance to the natural history of man, and may be so to medical science, to collect as many particulars as can be obtained; and, therefore, though the present instance has been

noticed by Mr. Pennant long ago, it will not be useless to describe the state of the same person now after so long an interval.—Mr. Pennant's is as follows:—

"In a former visit * to this place, my curiosity was excited to examine into the truth of a surprising relation of a woman in the parish of *Cylynin*, who had fasted a most supernatural length of time. I took boat, had a most pleasant passage up the harbour, charmed with the beauty of the shores, intermixed with woods, verdant pastures, and corn-fields. I landed, and, after a short walk, found, in a farm called *Tyddyn Bach*, the object of my excursion, *Mary Thomas*, who was boarded here, and kept with great humanity and neatness. She was of the age of forty-seven, of a good countenance, very pale, thin, but not so much emaciated as might have been expected, from the strangeness of the circumstances I am going to relate; her eyes weak, her voice low; she is deprived of the use of her lower extremities, and

* July 18th, 1770.

quite bed-ridden, her pulse rather strong, her intellects clear and sensible.

" On examining her, she informed me, that at the age of seven, she had some eruptions like the measles, which grew confluent and universal ; and she became so sore, that she could not bear the least touch : she received some ease by the application of a sheep's skin, just taken from the animal. After this she was seized, at spring and fall, with swellings and inflammations, during which time she was confined to her bed ; but in the intervals could walk about, and once went to *Holywell*, in hopes of cure.

" When she was about twenty-seven years of age, she was attacked with the same complaint, but in a more violent manner ; and, during two years and a half, remained insensible, and took no manner of nourishment, notwithstanding her friends forced open her mouth with a spoon, to get something down : but the moment the spoon was taken away, her teeth met, and closed with vast snapping and violence.

During that time she flung up great quantities of blood.

"She well remembers the return of her senses, and her knowledge of every body about her. She thought she had slept but a night, and asked her mother whether she had given her any thing the day before, for she found herself very hungry. Meat was brought to her; but, so far from being able to take any thing solid, she could scarcely swallow a spoonful of thin whey. From this time, she continued seven years and a half without any food, or liquid, excepting sufficient of the latter to moisten her lips. At the end of this period, she again fancied herself hungry, and desired an egg, of which she got down the quantity of a nut-kernel. About this time, she requested to receive the sacrament; which she did, by having a crumb of bread steeped in the wine. She now takes for her daily subsistence a bit of bread, weighing about two pennyweights seven grains, and drinks a wine-glass of water; sometimes a spoonful of wine: but frequently abstains whole days from food

and liquids. She sleeps very indifferently; the ordinary functions of nature are very small, and very seldom performed. Her attendant told me, that her disposition of mind was mild; her temper even; that she was very religious, and very fervent in prayer: the natural effect of the state of her body, long unembarrassed with the grossness of food, and a constant alienation of thought from all worldly affairs. She, at this time (1786), continues in the same situation, and observes the same regimen." *

Not having been able to see this woman myself, I requested a friend who had the opportunity of calling upon her to do so, and transmit an account of her to me. This he very obligingly has done as follows:—

"DEAR SIR, *August* 31, 1812.

" I had not much difficulty in finding out the subject of your inquiry, as she is

* *Mary Thomas* is still (Dec. 1809) living: but, for some time, has taken as much nourishment as could be expected

lodged in a cottage on the road between Dolgelley and Ynysfaig. Her name is Mary Thomas, and she is eighty-seven years of age, since Epiphany last (in Welsh Ystwyll), a favourite date of our countrymen. Her first appearance was, to me, frightful enough, as her features are peculiarly large, and the skin of her face is lank or leathery, and pallid. The ears, eyebrows, and mouth, are all prominent; indeed, the head altogether seems larger than that of any other I ever noticed, at that time of life. Her mental powers are tolerably good, and particularly so at her age. She says, that she was born free from any natural defect, and continued until ten years old in good health, when she had a very dangerous fever, which left her afflicted in her limbs. About her twentieth year she was taken by her parents to Holywell, for the recovery of her health; but returned without any benefit. She was

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at the advanced age of eighty-five years, sixty-five of which she had been confined to her bed. Her intellects are perfectly clear. In 1806 she remembered and spoke with pleasure of Mr. *Pennant's* visit to *Cylynin*.

about forty years of age, I believe, when she commenced her fasting life, and for ten years, she says, she took no nourishment; but had her lips occasionally wetted with sugar and water. This state of her life was called by the country people, Gweledigaeth, or * *Trance;* but I did not find that she remembered any thing particular during its continuance. The first solid morsel she ate upon her restoration, she remembers receiving from the hands of Mr. Lloyd, the clergyman of the parish. Since her return from Holywell she has ever been bed-ridden; though frequently removed from one house to another. Her present sustenance is a shilling loaf of the finest bread per week, taken in ale, of which also she has a shilling's worth weekly. She is nearly double in bed, and her arms are nothing but skin and bone. She has been for these many long years

* This expression evidently relates to the time when she remained insensible, which, according to Mr. Pennant's account, she did for two years and a half; after which she recovered the use of her senses, and the knowledge of every body about her. *See his Tour*, Vol. II. p. 262. Ed. 8vo, London, 1810.

supported by the parish of Cylynin, at the rate of two shillings per week. Besides this, however, she has received a good deal from her curious visitors, particularly in the summer season. The family of Arthog, which is close by, is also very charitable to her. I do not find that she belongs to any particular religious sect, but many good neighbours often read religious books to her, with which she is much pleased. I must not omit a report of the neighbours, that, during the early fever of which I spoke above, she was, at one time, supposed to be dead, at which time her mother earnestly exclaimed, in a wish to God, to have her *any how* restored to her, and in this condition she has remained. I remarked, that she has a strong desire to represent herself as a wonder. The people of the house know not when, or how much at a time, she eats, as she helps herself at pleasure from a box within her reach.

" I am, &c."

To this account I have only to add, that this woman died last year, viz. 1813.

During the year 1811, another case of the same kind, has much attracted the notice of the public, and the several accounts published leave no doubt of the fact. This is the case of Anne Moore, of Tetbury, who, for several years, is known to have existed, though not absolutely, without food, as she pretended; yet, even during the examination which proved the imposture, upon so small a quantity of aliment, for so long a time, as still to exhibit a surprising instance of abstinence, and such as the human body, had there been no disorder affecting it, seems to be incapable of. I am, therefore, inclined to assent to an opinion lately given by a writer in the Gentleman's Magazine, that an extraordinary abstinence, originally caused by disease, was attempted to be continued by imposture. The following particulars are taken from the Monthly Magazine for August, 1811, which are also confirmed, by an account given in the Magazine for October of the same year, "She "can sit up in her bed, read her Bible "and her Prayer-book, with the assistance "of glasses; and work at intervals at her

" needle. Her *memory* is *strong*. In re-
" spect to the use of her frame, all the
" lower parts, up to her body, *are useless*,
" and totally dead. Her legs are bent
" under her, and her sinews grown stiff;
" her voice is low and faint, but accu-
" rately distinct; she takes snuff, and now
" is in her fiftieth year."

Upon a comparison of these two cases it appears, that the abstinence did not impair the mental powers, the eye-sight, or the hearing; but that it did strongly affect the lower parts of the body, so as to contract the legs; perhaps, in consequence of their being deprived of nourishment, the functions of the parts which convey nourishment being weakened, and perhaps gradually obstructed by callosities; and the consequences in this respect ought to be a serious warning of the danger of such attempts to endure severe abstinence.

Even under all the circumstances of the two cases, and, admitting that some nourishment was taken in both, the

eagerness to prove the imposition in the latter, and the abrupt dereliction of inquiry when the pretence of the woman was found not to be true in its whole extent, can hardly be approved of as judicious or philosophical. It need not lessen the indignation justly excited by imposition, because the artifice by which the imposture was carried on, is made a further subject of inquiry; the imposture, as far as the conduct of the person deserved the name, cannot be excused, and ought not to be palliated; but, if inquiry should ascertain, that the human body may be so affected by a peculiar disease, as to require a comparatively insignificant portion of food for a great length of time, the fact would be as interesting, as curious in itself; and might lead to important consequences. In Mr. Pennant's account of Mary Thomas, two other instances of long abstinence are adduced, and he reasonably supposes a peculiar disease to have occurred in each of those cases; and, though the digestion of food is, in general, necessary to the preservation of life, yet, if the appetite cease, and the digestive and

evacuant functions, especially insensible perspiration, be repressed, it may still be a question, whether the blood, remaining in the same state nearly, may not sufficiently perform its office for the mere support of animal life for a great length of time, though it may not supply sufficient nourishment to the body. That the body was without sufficient nourishment, was evident in all these cases, from the contraction of the limbs. Whether the supposition I have made may afford any grounds for the belief of the existence of such a peculiar disease, it is not my office to determine. That there are artificial methods of preventing hunger for some days is well known. The Indians of America do it by pills, composed of tobacco and lime principally; and I have been told, that a countryman of mine, a man of real genius and singular resolution, has walked upwards of one hundred and fifty miles, without any other sustenance than a few drops of laudanum, when the sensation of hunger came on. He was, however, much reduced in body by the journey. Certainly a composition which, with the power of

suppressing appetite, should combine some nutritious substance in a small compass, might occasionally be of great use. Porphyry, in his life of Pythagoras, says, that this philosopher made use of compositions to prevent hunger and thirst. That to prevent hunger was made thus: "He took melon-seeds, sesamum, the coats of squills, washed till perfectly cleansed from their clammy juice, asphodel flowers, leaves of mallow, and meal of wheat-barley and vatches, of each an equal weight, all of which being pounded together, he made into a mass, by adding honey of Hymettus. For preventing thirst, he took the seed of cucumbers, pulp of raisins freed from the stones, coriander-flowers, seeds of mallows and purslain, scraped cheese, meal of parched-barley, and cream, and made them into a mass with the honey of importation.

"These," he said, "were prescribed by Ceres to Herculus, when he was sent into the deserts of Lybia; and by the use of them he kept his body constantly in the same state."

What, or whether any, attention may be due to these prescriptions, I know not; but, it may not be improper to observe, that the flowers of the coriander are too strong an opiate to be trifled with.

GAME OF KNAPPAN.

An Account of an ancient Game, formerly used in Pembrokeshire, South Wales, (and not till of late years entirely disused in some parts of it), from a Manuscript in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth. By one of that Country, who had himself been often an Actor in it.

* Being drawne to speake of the exercise of the bodie, I cannot overpasse a game used in † one parte of Pembroke-

* To account for this abrupt beginning, it will be perhaps necessary to observe, that the present paper is only a part of a Tract, on the gymnastic exercises of the county of Pembroke, at the time it was written, which, on a future occasion, may be presented to the public. It is hoped no apology will be required, for giving it in the ancient spelling of the original.

† Particularly in the hundred of Kemes, where the genuine British character and spirit, notwithstanding the Norman and Flemish intrusion, maintained its ground to the last, and is to this day discovered in greater purity, both with respect to the language, and the manners of the inhabitants, than in any other district of the county.

shire, among the Welchmen, both rare to heare, troublesome to describe, and painfull to practise; yet, for the raritie thereof, I crave pardon to trouble you, and, though somewhat long, yet as brieffe as I may. This game is called *Knappan*, and not unfitly, as shall be shewed. The game is thought to be of great antiquitie, and is as followeth.

The ancient Britaines, being naturally a warlike nation, did, noe doubt for the exercise of their youth, in tyme of peace, and to avoyd idlenes, devise games of activitie, where ech man might shewe his natural prowes and agility, as, some for strength of the body, by wrastling, lifting of heavie burdens; others for the arme, as in casting the barre, sledge-stone, or hurling the bowle or ball; others y^{t} excelled in swiftnes of foote, to wynne praise therein by running, and surely for the exercise of the partes aforesayd, this Knappan was prudentlie invented, had y^{e} same continued without abuse thereof, for in it beside the exercise of the bodily strengthe, it is not without resemblans of

warlike providence, as shall be hereafter declared; and first, before I describe you y^e^ play, I will let you knowe that this Knappan hapneth and falleth out to be by two meanes, the one is a setled or standing Knappan, the daie and place being knowne, and yearly haunted, and observed. Of these Knappan dayes in Pembrokeshire, were wont to be five in number, the first at the Burye sandes, between the parishes of Nevarne and Newporte, upon Shroft-tuesday yearly; the second at Pont Gynon on Easter-monday, between the parishes of Meliney and Eglwyserrowe; the third, on Low Easter-day, at *Pwll du* in Penbedw, betweene the parishes of Penrith and Penbedw; the 4th and 5th was wont to be at St. Meigan's in Kemes, betweene Kemes men on the one parte, and Emlyn men, and the men of Cardiganshire with them, of the other parte; the first upon Ascension day, the other upon Corpus Xti day; and these two last were the great and mayne playes, farre exceeding any of the former in multitude of people; for at these places there hath often tymes been esteemed two thou-

sande foot, beside horsemen. And at these dayes and places, were these games wont yerely to be exercised without any match making or appointment; and therefore I calle these standing Knappans; other the like plays would often times be, by makeing of matche betweene two gentlemen, and that at such holy-day or Sonday as pleased them to appointe, the tyme and place, which most commonly fell out to be the greatest plaies; for in these matches, the gentlemen would divide the parishes, hundreds, or shires, betweene them, and then would eche laboure to bring the greatest number, and would therein entreate all his friendes and kinsmen in every parish to com and brin his parish wholly with him, by which meanes great numbers would most usually meete, and therefore against these matches there would alsoe resorte to the place, divers victuallers, wth meate, drinke, and wine of all sortes, alsoe merchants, mercers, and pedlers, would provide stales and bothes to shewe and utter theire wares; and for these causes some to play, some to eate and drinke, some to buy, some to sell, others to see, and others

to be seen, (you knowe what kind I meane) great multitudes of people would resorte beside the players ; they contende not for any wager or valuable thinge, but only for glory and renown, first for the fame of theire countrey in generall, next every particular to wynn prayse for his activitie and prowes, which two considerations ardently enflame the mindes of the youthful people, to strive to the death for glory and fame, which they esteeme dearer unto them than worldlie wealthe. Their matches are commonly made without stint of number, but as they happen to come, wherein alsoe appeareth a policie, which shall be shewed hereafter, for the weaker number to save the glory of their countrey againest the greater multitude.

The companiones being come together, about one or two of the clock in the afternoone, beginneth the play in this sorte: After a crye made, both parties drawe together into some plaine, all first stripped bare, saving a light paire of breeches, bare headded, bare bodied, bare legges and feete, their cloathes being layd toge-

ther in greate heapes, under the charge of certen keepers, appointed for the purpose, for if he leave but his shirte on his backe, in the furie of the game it is most commonly torne to peeces; and I have alsoe seene some long locked gallants trymly trimmed at this game, not by powling, but by pulling theire haire and beardes; for washing balles the barber useth but his fistes, and insteede of warme water, taketh luke-warme bludd out of the nose, mouth, and face, of the younker. This kinde of trymming they all doe gratis, without asking any thing for their paynes.

The foote companyes thus meeting, there is a round bowle prepared of a reasonable quantitie, soe as a man may holde it in his hand, and noe more; this boule is of some massie wood, as boxe, ewe, crabb, or holy-tree, and should be boyled in tallowe for to make it slippery, and hard to be holden: this boule is called Knappan, and is by one of the company hurled bolt upright to the ayere, and at the falle, he that catcheth it, hurleth it towardes, the countrey he playeth for, (for gole or ap-

pointed place there is none, neither needeth anie), for the play is not given over untill the Knappan be soe farre carried that there is noe hope to returne it backe that night; for the carrying it a mile, or twoe miles, from the first place, is not losing of the honour, soe it be still followed by the company, and the play still maintayned; it is oftentymes seene the chase to followe two miles and more in heat of course, both by the horse and foote. The Knappan beinge once cast furth, you shall see the same tossed backwarde and forwarde, by hurling throwes in straunge sorte; for in three or foure throwes, you shall see the whole body of the game removed half a myle and more, and in this sorte it is a straunge sight to see a 1000 or 1500 naked men to come neere together in a cluster in followinge the Knappan, as the same is hurled backwarde and forwarde; there are, beside the corps or mayne bodie of the play, certaine scoutes or forerunners, whose charge is alwaies to keepe before the Knappan which way so ever it passes; these alwaies be of the adverse

partie, between the other partie and home, least by surreption the Knappan should be snatched by a borderer of the game, and soe carried away by foote or horse. To those scouts you shall all day heere the bodie of the mayne plaie crie, with loude voyces, *Cadw ôl*, that is, Look well to their backs, as though theire cheefe care lay in that pointe, as it doth in deede. If the Knappan come into the hands of a lustie hurler, he throweth the same in a wonderful sorte towardes his countrey, further than anie man would judge the strength of the arme were able; if it hapneth to the handes of a goode footeman, he presently sengleth himselfe and runneth, and breaketh out of the bodie of the game into some plaine grounde in the swiftest sorte he can, which beeinge perceaved, all the companie followeth where the good footemanshipp of all the company is plainlie descerned; being a comfortable sight to see 5 or 600 good footemen to follow in chase a myle or two, as a greyhound after a hare, where you shall see some gaine in running upon his precedentes; some forced to come behinde those that were once foremost, which

greatly delighteth the beholders, and forceth them to follow likewise, to see the pleasure of the chase: and thus the one seeketh to wynn honor by hys footemanship untill he be overtaken by a better runner, or encountered by one of the scoutes, which will not faile to meete him; and when he seeth himselfe neere surprised, or that his breathe or legges faile him, he hurleth the boule forward towards his countrey with a greate violence, and perchance it lighteth to some of his fellowes, who caryeth the same as farre againe, which notwithstanding is not given over as long as the mayne bodie is any thing neere at hand; and when the boule hapneth to one of the contrarie parte, it cometh back againe as fast: and in this sorte you shall in an open feeld see 2000 naked people followe this boule backwarde and forwarde, Est, West, South, and North; soe that a straunger that casuallie should see such a multitude soe ranging naked, would thinke them distracted. It is straunge to behold with what egerness this play is followed; for, in the furie of the chase, they respect neither hedge, ditch, pale, or

walle, hille, dale, bushes, river, or rocke, or any other passable impediment; but all seemeth plaine unto them, wherein alsoe they shewe suche agillitie in running, such activitie in leaping, such strength and skilfull deliverance in hurling, such bouldness in assaulting, such stoutness in resisting, such pollicie in inventing, such skill in preventing, as taking them out of theire game, they are not able to performe or invent halfe the prowes or devises shewed in the same; a thing much noted of men of judgement. The horsmen have monstrous cudgelles, of three foote and a halfe long, as big as the party is well able to weld, and he that thinketh himselfe well horsed, maketh meanes to his friends of the footmen to have the Knappan delivered him, which being gotten, he putteth spurres, and away as fast as the legges will cary. After him runneth the rest of the horsmen; and if they can overtake him, he summoneth a delivery of the Knappan, which should be thrise, by lawe of the game; but now they scarse give it over till he strike, and if he held the Knappan, it is lawfull for the assaliant to beat him with his cod-

gell till he deliver it; the best of foote troupes alsoe will followe the horse, who are soe well enseyned by the often exercise of this game, as that when the horsmen misse to fetch up the Knappan, the foote will often recover the same, and will in heate of chase followe the Knappan two or three myles, till the horse be spent, and will bringe backe the Knappan when it is out sigh and past hope. This exercise, if due orders were observed, and the abuses reformed, were a most warlike exercise, both for horse and foote; but the disorders are soe increased, that the play is banished and almost forsaken; for, by the anciente custome of the play, the footmen were not to use any thinge but the bare fiste, neither was it permitted to the horsmen to come amonge the foote troupes; for that the footmen playing all bare footed, may receve great annoyance by the horse, and therefore it was permitted for the foote to chase the horsmen from among them by hurling stones at them; alsoe the horsmens cogell was to be assised by drawing it throwe a ring, made for the purpose, and the same to be of hasell,

soe as the same might harme, but not mightilie hurte any person; alsoe it was not lawfull to strike anie man having the Knappan; but after three summons or demandes to hurle of the Knappan, which if he did deliver from him, he was to rest in peace, and free from the bastinado, neither might anie horsman or foot be assaulted that had not the Knappan, nor longer to be cogelled then he held the same. These and divers other good ordinances, as the reporte goeth, hath been belonging to this game in old tyme; but now at this playe privat grudges are revenged, soe that for every small occasion they fall be the eares, which being but once kindled betweene two, all persons of both sides becom parties, soe that somtymes you shall see 5 or 600 naked men beating in a cluster together as fast as the fistes can goe, and theire parte must be taken, every man with his company, soe that you shall see two brothers, the one beating the other, the man the master, and friend against friend; they nowe allsoe will not sticke to take upp stones, and there with in their fistes beat theire fellowes,

the horsmen will intrude and ride into the footmen's troopes, the horsman choseth the greatest cudgell he can gett, and the same of oak, ashe, blackethorne, or crab-tree, and soe huge as it were able to strike down an ox or horse; he will alsoe assalt any for privat grudge, that hath not the Knappan, or cogell him after he hath dealt the same from him; and when one blowe is given all faleth by the eares, each assaulting other with these unreasonable cogells, sparing neither head, face, nor anie parte of the bodie; the footmen fall soe close to it, being once kindled, as they wholly forgett the plaie, and fall to beating till they be out of breath, and then some number holde theire handes upp over theire heads, and crye *Heddwch, Heddwch*, that is, Peace, Peace; and often tymes this parteth them, and to theire plaie they goe anewe; neither may there be anie looker on at this game, but all must be actors; for soe is the custome and curtesie of the plaie: for if one that cometh with a purpose onely to see the game, be he foote or horsman, when the multitude shall enclose him in, as often

tymes in following of the boule is seene to happen, and then the looker on, being in the middest of the troupe, is made a player, by giving him a bastonado or two, if he be on horse, and by lending him halfe a dozen cuffes if he be on foote; this much may a straunger have of curtesie, although he expect nothing at their handes.

You shall see gamesters returne home from this playe, with broaken heads, black faces, brused bodies, and lame legges; yett laughing and merily jesting at theire harmes, telling theire adversaries how he brake his head, to another that he strocke him on the face, and how he repayed the same to him againe, and all this in good myrth, without grudge or hatred; and if any be in arrereges to the other, they score it up till the next playe, and in the meane tyme, will continue loving friendes; whereas, if the least of these blowes be offered out of this playe, it presentlie breedeth unquencheable quarrells; by this you see the horsman's game, is right horse playe, and their lawe plain Stafford lawe.

If the one partie perceive itself to be overmatched in number, which is knowne by the over manie throwes on that side, and so for feare to loase the honor of that dayes worke, theire pollicie is to make as manie thronges and stopps as they can, which in Welsh they call **Cade*, which is to stoppe and hould the boule from plaie, and is don in this sorte: one of the weaker side, hapning on the Knappan, clappeth the same ag^t^ his belly, holding it fast with both his handes, another of his company claspeth him aboute the mydle, turning face to face, soe then is the Knappan in fastness betweene both theire bellies, and then cometh more of the same syde, and layeth gripes on, and round about them both, soe that you shall see a 100 or 120 thus clustered together, as bees when a swarme is knitt together, the boule being in the middest of them, which the other partie seeketh to open or undoe by haling and pulling, but in vayne soe long, till the first men be out of breath, and can endure

* I presume the Author means Cád, which is the imperative of Cadw, to keep, or hold fast.

this labour noe longer; thus you shall have the boule stopped a quarter of an houre, and then another company undertaketh the like toyle, and thus by 8 or 9 throngs, they will weare out the daye, and give over playe without disgrace to themselves and theire countrey.

The throwes which are made in this game, and which are straunge to beholde, be called by the name of **Llyw* or *Llywo*, which is not to be applied to any kind of throwing, but of the Knappan onely, which Virgil, in describing this game, termeth "*Magno ingyro & curvatis spaciis*," by reason of the great compass which the boule maketh in flieing.

This playe of Knappan seemeth to be an ancient exercise, descended to us Welshmen from our first progenitors the Trojans; for the heroicall poet Virgil, in describing the rage of Queene Amata, wife

* I cannot discover the affinity between *Llyw* and (as I apprehend it should be written) *Llywio*, and *throwing*, unless it signify, that the throws in this game *govern* it; the whole seeming to depend on them.

to King Latinus, being enraged by poyson of Alecto for the intended marriage of her Lavinia with our ancient progenitor Æneas, could not better describe the same, then by comparing her madd rage to the fury of this game:

"Immensam fine more furit, lymphata per urbem
Ceu quondam forte volitans subverbere turbo
Quem pueri magno in gyro vacua atria circum
Intenti ludo exercent ille actus habena
Curvatis fertur spaciis, stupet inscia turba
Impubesque manus mirata volubile buxum.
Dant animos plagæ, non cursu segnior illo
Per medias urbes agitur."

Virgil Æneid. 7th lin. 377.

Which, to interprett, I will use the wordes of oure countreyman and worthie scholar* Mr. Doctor Phaer, in his translation of that author, which are these:

* Doctor Phaer was a physician; and I believe the first of his family who resided in Pembrokeshire, being the son of Thomas Phaer, of Norwich, Esq., by Clara, daughter of Sir William Goodyear, knight, of London. He married Anne, daughter of Thomas Walter, alderman, of Carmarthen, by whom he left two daughters; he translated Virgil in his retirement on the banks of the Tivy, and was buried at Kilgerran church. In an old manuscript by me, I find this brief character of him: "Thomas Phaer, doctor of

"She rayling, rampes, and runnes, and throughe the towne she troubleth all,
Much like as when by strength of sling, is cast a whirling ball,
Whom boyes for their disport, in cloyster wide, or vacant hall,
Intentive drive with noise, it throwen with force, before them falles;
The careless prease, pursues with wond'ring much, the bowle of box,
From youth to youth that rolles, theire courage kindleth more by knoxe,
None otherwise, and with no lesse concurres, she gads about,
Through cities, myds, and townes, and people thick, she gathereth out."

And in the margent, Mr. Phaer, being as well acquainted with this game, as practised in the author, layeth this note upon the place: "This playe is used in Wales, and the ball is called Knappan," whereby he seemeth to understand the Knappan nowe used in this countrey, to be

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Physick, a man honored for his learninge, commended for his government, and beloved for his pleasante natural conceiptes. He chose Pembrokeshire for his earthly place, where he lived worshipfully, and ended his dayes to the greeffe of all good men, at the forest of Kilgerran, being his chosen seat. He translated the Eneydos of Virgil, a worke of none worthilie commended, though commended of most, shewing in the auctor his great skill, learninge, and aptnes of nature."

the same plaie spoken of by Virgil, used in ancient tyme among the people of Eneas, and our ancient cozens the Cornish men, have the selfe same exercise among them yett observed, which they call *Hurling*, whereby it seemeth this exercise is more ancient than orderly observed.

Thus having tyred myselfe, in describing this unruly playe, I will here ende with a merie jeste or two, touching the same sporte: On a tyme, a gentleman of good note, being desirous to see the game, and being well mounted on a fayer gelding, made meanes that he had the Knappan delivered him, and putt his horse to his footmanship, who, farre exceeding any of the company for stature and good keeping, thought himselfe sure from overtaking; but his gelding, falling once out of breath, began to slack, and the gentleman was overtaken by an old grey-headded countrey swayne, hoarse in voyce, and rude in maners, mounted upon a little leane nagg, furnished with a padd and coller, but better breathed then the stall-fed gelding, summoned the gentleman to dele the

Knappan, who, scorning the fellowe, spurred on, and at the third summons, the old rider shewed the gentleman the lawe of game, and with his cogell, measured the breadeth of his shoulders, and againe and againe, then on the head, and on as fast as he could untill the gentleman cryed amayne, and looking aboute, saw non but himselfe and this rude Knappaner in place, desired him to hold his hande (if he were a man) till he might draw the Knappan out of his hose, and delivered the Knappan to the old man, with Christ's curse, and his with it, and soe did this old man conjure the fiend out of his hose, that soe tormented him, and the gentleman delyvered out of danger; and at his coming that night to his lodging, being a brother's house of his, sware the playe was aptly called Knappan, for, sayd he, I have gotten by it stores of *knappes* on my head and shoulders. — Another young man havinge once a horsback, caried away the Knappan, which he turned to his greate prayse---the next playe came; well, to the game, assuring himselfe to doe the like, rod up and downe a greate parte of the day,

and missed to have in handling; whereupon he devysed a waye to deceive the people, by making them belevee he had the Knappan, singled himselfe out of the companie, and in a faire large plaine, put his horse to runne away race, which being descerned, all the horsmen followed, thinking he had the Knappan. In the end being overtaken, was summoned to cast the Knappan, but he spurred on; the other, in the ende, layd one loade on his head and shoulders, till he cried, Leave, I have not the Knappan. The other would not trust his word, still willed him with stripes to lay down the Knappan: then he sware by God, he had it not. The other would not beleave his oathe without a booke, which he had no leasure to hold him, layd on soe fast, that he strake him downe, and lighting, riffled and rent his hose, and cloathes, and then perceived he had not the Knappan, sayd he would believe hys word the next tyme; but gave him his blessing; that he cryed *och!* for cosening him of a beating in that sorte; and soe he returned to his fellowes, where he found the Knappan tossed between

them, and made his complainte to them how he had been deceived.---Another pretie conceyte, worthe the remembring, uttered by one in the yeare 1588, when the Spaniards were with theire termed (not truely) invincible navy on the coast, seeing in the Knappan a multitude of horse and footmen, all by the eares fighting, to number of 6 or 700, whereof most were hurt and bloody, asked how this would be pacified? Well, said one, this is all in playe, and will be taken in good parte. If this be but playe, quoth the other man, I could wish the Spaniardes were here to see our playes in England, certes they would be in bodily feare of our warre.

Another poore man, A. D. 1587, being a yeare of great scarcitie of corne, and having gone out of his countrey for want of bread, seeing a multitude of naked men haling and pulling one at another up and downe the fieldes, after the Knappan, never seene by him before, asked about what they strived in that sorte, was answered, they strived who should have

the Knappan: what (quoth he) is that Knappan? It is, sayd the other, a boule of wood little bigger then my fist. O fooles! sayd the other, to keepe such a sturre for a peece of wood; they would, I warrant you, strive mightily, if there were a peny loafe of bread cast in among them, who should have it.

This which I have written of this Knappan, I writt most as *testis oculatus*, for that I have beene oftentymes an agent and patient at this unruly exercise, and often have felt the smarte that I have written (especially of the horse playe); and therefore, as in deedes, I may here conclude with these wordes, "*In cujus rei testimonium sigilla sua opposuerunt:*" which signes and seales I carrye in my head, handes, and other partes of my body.

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THE END.

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